Unspotted from the World

A. C. Stevenson

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BY

A. C. STEVENSON.

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UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

One bright autumn morning, Blank street, Chicago, where nothing but large, comfortable dwellings are to be seen, was as quiet as a country lane.

In a room of one of these dwellings were two very busy young ladies. They were young to people past thirty, whatever they were to those under fifteen, and to many people they were ladies, judging merely from the quality of their clothes and the taste displayed in the decoration of their room. There were evident preparations for a journey, as two trunks, well strapped, stood at one side of the room, and one of the young ladies was busily engaged packing a valise.

The other sat in front of a large mirror holding a hand-glass in one hand and her half-coiled knot of hair in the other, while she slowly turned her head, getting all

points of view in the reflections from both mirrors. She was the first to speak.

"Mrs. Woodmanse, isn't it time you were dressing?"

As there was no reply, she looked around with a slight smile at her sister, who smiled in return, but made no other answer.

"Well, that is your name, and I have to get used to it."

"It would please me just as much if you amused yourself in some other way."

"Well, then, Florence, my dear sister, do you not think it is time you were dressing? I have almost finished and I will do the rest of your packing for you."

"My packing is finished, unless I think of something else. If I do, I hope it will be after I am on the train; I am tired of dragging out old things I may never need."

"Come then and comb your hair. I have to watch after you all the time. If it hadn't been for me you would never have married; and if it wasn't for me now you wouldn't get off to your new home and your husband."

"And must I thank you if my new home is not a happy one?"

"Oh, you are proud to be going to meet your husband in spite of your apparent indifference."

"Perhaps I am; I don't know, I am sure."

"You never seem to know, although you always have more reasons pro and con than any one I ever knew." Although the coil of hair seemed completed, she still examined it carefully, as she continued: "Your indifference would have killed the affection of any man except the true-hearted John. I never saw a man so desperately in love in my life. I admired him very much myself when we first met him, but I could never make any impression when you were around." She still lingered at the mirror, not perfectly satisfied with her hair, or lost in admiration of the reflection there. "But it has always been so. I could look my best and make my best effort at conversation, and as soon as you came into the room with that cool, indifferent air of yours I would get nothing but absent glances and a deaf ear. It never made any difference who the young man was."

"Oh, Emma! you know you were always

considered the beauty," Florence said in self-defense; but the smile she could not control showed that she was pleased by this flattery, although she tried to resist it. But the smile quickly left her face, and she said: "I am thankful this year's embarrassing position is ended." Getting up, she took the chair in front of the mirror, which Emma had finally left, and commenced to take down her hair.

Florence Brown and John Woodmanse were married a year before this; and he, just graduated from a medical college and too poor to take her with him, started to California immediately after the ceremony to seek a practice in his profession. It had been her wish that they should not be married until he had a practice; but he had insisted until she consented without being convinced. He had once thought if he could get her consent to marry him his mind would be at ease; but after he got her promise he could not rest until she was irrevocably his.

He had more than his share of that strange mixture of assurance and diffidence which is so evident in many young people.

Graduated from the high school of a country town in Illinois, he had felt competent to take up the study of any profession he might choose, and in the medical college he was always ready to attempt any subject in the books or in the clinique even when more experienced men hesitated. But the forms of social life which are founded on ancient customs and are so destitute of reason or anything that he could grasp to master, filled him with fear and trembling. In the presence of his sweetheart and her other admirers he was always afraid that he might be guilty of some breach of etiquette. But urged on by his strong emotions, there was nothing for him but to do all in his power to win. Even with all of the assurance that at times came to his assistance his success was almost a surprise to him.

To Florence this year while John was building up his practice had been a very trying one indeed. To her there was no pleasure in the mere knowledge that she was a married woman, and it had been a great embarrassment to have to explain why she was not with her husband. She

had many opportunities to think bitterly of her own good nature, which allowed her judgment to be borne down by his stronger will. It was this disposition that she had seen in him to be so strong in his emotions and so little amenable to reason that had caused her to hold out so long before she would give her consent to marry him at all. He was a good man, but so decided in his views of right and wrong that he seemed disagreeably rigid, and sometimes even aggressive to her, for she often doubted from seeing so many things to be considered. Although her opinions were seemingly pliant, it was an addition to their strength rather than a loss, but it prevented him from seeing their strength and almost from realizing that they ever differed in opinions; while she was vividly and almost painfully conscious of it.

Emma, whose opinions were hers by adoption, would have suited him perfectly (in that way at least), as she could have adopted his. It was Emma who had been the first to appreciate him, and it was her friendship that encouraged him to continue to try for Florence. As Florence knew

that she could never love any of the other men who had offered themselves, she had listened to Emma's argument that she would certainly learn to love John. She had never felt that she must be married at some time, neither did a single life seem attractive to her; but she had as much of that restless desire for change as most young people have, and this helped her to make the decision. If she felt that this was a poor kind of enthusiasm to take to the altar she also felt that it was the only kind that she would ever be able to take. To many people her apparent indifference may seem more like love than his passion. She had retained her head sufficiently to know his disposition, and to balance his faults with his virtues; while he was enamored with the superficial woman—the perfect figure, the graceful carriage and wonderfully pleasing countenance. It had required all of her charity at times during this year of waiting to be patient with his impatience, and it gave her a great sense of relief to know that it was over.

"You are going to take this with you?"

Emma asked, taking a photograph from off the dresser.

"I am going to put it in last and have it convenient to look at so he won't seem so much like a stranger to me."

"So he won't seem so much like a stranger to you?" Emma repeated. "You know him better now than he knows himself. Isn't he handsome?" she said, looking at the photograph as she held it in her hand.

"He would be if he would shave off those ugly whiskers," Florence answered.

"Oh, no. He would look too boyish without them, and I think they are becoming to a face like his."

The face in the picture (aside from a rather wild look in the eyes and an unnatural stiffness about the lips, doubtless caused from a consciousness that he was having his picture taken) was handsome; with well-defined, symmetrical features and a self-reliant, proud expression that was not unkind. The first suggestion of the face was one of strength.

Florence, with a few rapid movements, arranged her hair. When both were ready (the one for her long journey, the other to

accompany her to the train) it brought their parting so near to them that they could not restrain their tears as they held each other in a long embrace. Each was the other's dearest friend and nearest relative. Since they could first remember they had slept together in this room in the home of their childless aunt and uncle, who were the only parents they had ever known. It was quite an undertaking for Florence to step forth into the world, not because her heart was weak, but because her head would doubt.

CHAPTER II.

If Mrs. Snowdon had ever thought on the subject, she would have decided that there were castes in heaven. This subject for thought really never occurred to her, but if it had, she certainly would have had good reasons for deciding it in that way. In her youth she lived in a small town in Ohio, an hour's ride by train from Cleveland. As her mother was a prosperous dressmaker and her father employed in a small factory, they were able to dress and educate her as other young people of the town were dressed and educated, and she had gone in the best society. Occasionally her mother had to send to Cleveland for goods, and as soon as Mrs. Snowdon was old enough she sent her. And again she had sometimes gone with other young people on an excursion for the day. These trips to the city had been the happiest days of her life. Cleveland was paradise to her, as it was to many of the young people with whom she associated,

and their admiration for anyone who lived there was almost adoration. As she had grown older, and her mind had broadened, she came to think that any city was a paradise and the larger the city the more of a paradise.

When she married and went to a city to live (it is true Los Angeles was not a very large city, but nevertheless it was a city to her) she thought her happiness complete, but in this she was mistaken. After living there some time she learned that there were degrees in paradise—there were even streets on which the angels were of a higher caste. After ten years of patient struggling, she was proud to know that she lived on Figaroa street. They had a small house on that part of the street which had been recently opened through the hills and entirely different from the rest of the street; none the less it made her heart beat faster to be able to tell people that she lived in Los Angeles on Figaroa street.

This worship of a city was so devout that when she and her husband decided to go back to their native town in Ohio to make a visit, she told her friends that they were

going to Cleveland. It appeared in the Los Angeles paper that Mr. and Mrs. Snowdon, of Figaroa street, were going to Cleveland, Ohio, to visit friends and relatives. The small town where they really intended to visit was not mentioned.

Now that they had made their visit to friends and relatives, and were passing through Chicago on their road home, they had a few minutes to wait after transferring their baggage to the Los Angeles car on the Santa Fe train. These few minutes they spent outside of the station door, breathing in the atmosphere of this great city.

Mr. Snowdon was a large, fat man, with a large face, a thin-lipped mouth that drooped slightly at the corners, a large, fat nose, small black eyes, thin eyebrows, and a narrow forehead. Mrs. Snowdon also had a large nose and dark eyes, but her eyes were large. They looked enough alike to be brother and sister.

When Mr. Snowdon said that Chicago was larger than New York, Mrs. Snowdon listened with bated breath. "Won't we have time to take a street car ride and see a part

of it?" she asked. This question being decided in the negative, Mr. Snowdon went back to stand by the side of the train and talk to the porter (there is no one that can swallow a good fish story with more grace than a colored porter), while Mrs. Snowdon lingered a few minutes longer. Just as she was turning to go, a carriage drove up (evidently a private carriage from its fineness and the life of the horses), and two young ladies got out. Their beauty and the stylishness of their clothes, which constituted their chief beauty in her eyes, were to her mind fully in keeping with this great city. As they went into the station Mrs. Snowdon went to the train and joined her husband in the pose of wealthy Californians before the porter.

The two young ladies with two others soon came from the ticket office down beside the waiting train. The conductor pointed them to the Los Angeles car, and told the porter the number of the berth. The porter took their valises, and they all went into the car.

"Aren't they swell?" Mrs. Snowdon said to her husband.

"They are not half as nice looking as Los Angeles girls," he replied, showing a disposition to always glorify what was relatively nearer himself.

When the conductor called "all aboard" and the Snowdons scrambled on, they met the four young ladies hurrying out. Three got off and stood waving their handkerchiefs at the one remaining in the vestibule of the car, as the train moved off.

Florence Woodmanse soon lost sight of her sister and friends, and was compelled to turn her back upon Chicago and go into the car. The rest of the afternoon she sat watching, but seldom seeing, the passing landscape. She felt no regret, but only a peaceful relief from the nervous strain of getting ready to go, and most of all the saying good-bye. Her mind was now free from all responsibility, and she could rest in a quiet happiness that the motion of the train aided. The continuous succession of meadow, cornfield and pasture land, herds of cattle, men gathering the corn or driving along the long, monotonous country roads, and the farm buildings, were entertaining for a short time only.

She took out one of the books she had provided to help pass the time, and commenced to read. For years reading had been her favorite occupation, but she found reading on the train very different from what it had been at home. She tried first one of her books and then another, but only succeeded in reading a little by spells, varied by looking out of the window. Of this last occupation she was becoming extremely tired, but her eyes would wander from her book and out onto the passing landscape.

This was Mrs. Snowdon's opportunity. She had not knowingly waited for it, but had been trying all the afternoon to make advances toward an acquaintance with what she felt confident must be one of Chicago's most brilliant society belles—she was so dainty, so complete. She now felt sure that Florence must be getting tired, so she got boldly up and went across the car and smiling sweetly, spoke to her and sat down in the seat facing her. They chatted for quite half an hour or more. Mrs. Snowdon laughed a great deal when she talked; she laughed when she learned that the motion of the train made Florence tired—it never

made her tired; she liked it. She asked Florence her name and destination, and if she had always lived in Chicago; her husband's occupation, and so forth. She did not ask all of these questions at once, but distributed them along with the things she told of herself—that they lived on Figaroa street in Los Angeles, and had been back to Cleveland to visit friends and relatives, and how many times she had crossed the continent. She called her husband over and introduced him, and he helped her to tell Florence what a wonderful country she was going to, and how fortunate she was to be going to make it her new home.

"There is no country in the world just like California," he said. "None where it is so cool in summer and so warm in winter. The people who have lived in Italy and also in California have all said that the latter country is far superior to the former, not only in climate, but in its fruits and the variety of its products—in fact, in everything."

Florence said that Doctor Woodmanse had written her some very glowing descriptions of the country. Thus encouraged,

Snowdon went on and extolled California to the skies. If he lied, he lied naturally and easily, and had the strange virtue (if nature is ruled by laws, and he must lie, it was a virtue) of believing them himself. He seemed to believe them none the less because they were often crude; even absurdly crude at times. This necessity to lie was not because he admired a lie so much, but because the truth was so flat and uninteresting; he would as soon have tried to entertain his friends by giving them water to sip as to entertain them by telling them the truth.

This social effort of the Snowdons proved a great boon to Florence. It took her mind off of herself—she forgot about being tired. Going into the dining car for supper was another diversion. A hearty supper and a little walk from one end of the car to the other when she got back into the sleeper were very refreshing. There were but few passengers in the car beside the Snowdons. A woman with two children, whom she continually scolded, and they as continually disobeyed, and several men, who spent most of their time in the smoking room, were all.

The evening passed quickly to Florence, and the night still more so. She knew nothing from the time her head touched the pillow until she opened her eyes in the morning. She would have been more contented if she had known that the first day was to be the only day she was to experience much fatigue. The Snowdons greeted her with bright smiles like old friends. At Kansas City they had breakfast and time for open-air exercise. The air about the station could not be called fresh, but it was a relief from the confinement of the car. When they had started again, Florence tried several books in succession, but found none of them inviting on account of the distaste she had taken to them the day before. As she sat looking out of the window Mrs. Snowdon asked her if she would not like to play cards.

Mrs. Snowdon's idea of bliss was a card party in a Pullman sleeper. She gloried in the rich woodwork and upholstering of these cars, and she was ecstatic over a game of cards with people she could admire. With Florence's consent she told Mr. Snowdon

to go into the smoking room and get another player, so they could play whist.

"Get the young man that smokes a pipe," Mrs. Snowdon called as her husband started for the smoking room. "He is awfully nice looking," she said to Florence. "Haven't you noticed him?" As Florence had not, Mrs. Snowdon went on: "He got on at Chicago, too; I didn't know but maybe you knew him."

Mr. Snowdon soon came back with the "nice-looking" young man, whom he introduced as Mr. Gifford. He had a clean-shaved, dark-skinned face and hollow cheeks, which made his cheekbones rather conspicuous. He was not handsome, except with the handsomeness of a strong, intelligent face, and a strong, manly figure.

When Mrs. Snowdon saw them coming she began to talk louder and to laugh a great deal. This loud laughing, when in the presence of people she admired, was not caused so much by a desire to attract attention to herself as it was a direct result of her excitement. They took seats at the table as she directed. She had been planning these games ever since they left Chicago—she

had planned them for every day of the journey.

"I'm afraid that I'm a very poor whist player," Florence said.

"That doesn't matter—we will beat them," said Mr. Snowdon with confidence.

"No you won't," Mrs. Snowdon said laughing.

"Whist is the only game at cards that is worth playing at all," Snowdon said.

"I can't say that it is a favorite game of mine," said Gifford. "But I am an indifferent player at any game."

"There is some science to whist," Snowdon added, as he began to shuffle the cards.

When the cards were dealt conversation ceased. Mr. and Mrs. Snowdon kept silence because they thought it a part of the game, and the others because they were studying their cards with the fear that they might make some misplay and spoil the game; but they soon lost their fear when they saw some of the poor plays the others made. Nor did it come back to Florence when Mr. Snowdon so evidently gave the impression that he blamed her because they lost the first game. Mrs. Snowdon was

wildly happy over winning it; and as she became more excited her laugh grew louder.

The next game went the other way, and it was Mr. Snowdon's turn to laugh, which he found it difficult to do for coughing; a fat man's cough; something that is impossible for anyone weighing less than two hundred pounds to imitate. He complimented Florence on her playing, and removed to a great extent the disagreeable impression he had made at the end of the first game. While each hand was being shuffled the points of the previous ones were discussed, and the two players who had thought themselves indifferent at the beginning of the play, felt their interest growing—the enthusiasm of the other two was contagious.

The next game went to Mrs. Snowdon and Gifford. Florence was very indifferent when she and Snowdon lost, but he went into the sulks. Mrs. Snowdon's rapture seemed as much over her partner as it did over the game. As she warmed toward Gifford he drew into himself and answered her questions only in monosyllables, or as briefly as he could. She was determined to

know if he were not from Chicago. She learned that he lived on a farm in Indiana, but was going to California, expecting to make that his home. And then Mrs. Snowdon again experienced the pleasure of telling that they lived on Figaroa street in Los Angeles. Figaroa street meant nothing to Gifford, but Mrs. Snowdon had never thought there was anyone in the world in whose breast the mere mention of that name would not cause a glow of delight or of envy.

Mr. Snowdon again launched forth in extravagant praise of California. Gifford did not take much interest in what he said, as he had heard much of his talk in the smoking room. He had heard him make the assertion that the stock yards at Los Angeles were superior to those at Chicago, and stick all the firmer to his assertion when someone insisted that there were no stock yards at Los Angeles. He did admit that they might not be quite so large, but they were better—better in every respect. When Gifford could be kept no longer, he turned to Florence and continued the subject; but

after listening for a short time, she too, was glad to escape to her seat.

In the afternoon they played cards again. Although Florence did not admire the Snowdons, she was willing to make the best of disagreeable circumstances. She always shirked painful feelings when it cost so little and was glad when the afternoon was gone and she had felt almost no fatigue as compared to the day before. Her lessened fatigue was not all due to the cards by any means. She was becoming accustomed to the motion of the train, and had been careful to exercise as much as possible. Gifford had made quite a different impression upon her from the Snowdons. His modest manners that were almost awkward at first, were pleasing to her. The crude boastfulness of the Snowdons about their scientific playing had caused a subtle sympathy between the two more modest players without regard to the fact that they were playing against each other.

CHAPTER III.

Gifford, who had the habit of analyzing his feelings, was conscious of a growing antipathy to the Snowdons, and especially to Mrs. Snowdon; her cackling laugh and the way she had of looking at him were very repugnant; and only his extreme good nature caused him to allow himself to be dragged out of his corner and away from his book to play cards.

He had shown no inclination to be sociable except as he had been pressed into service; but happening to come out of the dining room after supper at the same time Florence did, he made an effort to enter into conversation with her. "The passengers rush for the dining room when the train stops like a pack of wolves," he said with a smile that only accented his embarrassment.

"They do act very much like wolves," Florence answered. "Perhaps traveling makes them hungry. It does me. Yester-

day at noon I ate but very little lunch, and before night I almost perished; but to-day I have eaten three hearty meals, consequently I don't feel the least bit tired."

"Perhaps the card playing has kept you from feeling fatigued."

Florence looked at him to see if his words had any hidden reference to the Snowdons, whom she felt confident he did not like.

But Gifford was too ingenuous to attempt to disguise his thoughts. "I think Snowdon's lies are more exhilarating than the card playing."

Florence could not help laughing at this plain speech. "Judging from the way you run from him," she said, "whenever he begins his glowing descriptions of California, I can't think how you can call them exhilarating."

"Well, I have had the advantage of hearing him express his opinions of California quite often in the smoking room, and I feel as though I would like to retain a little of my original idea of that country. I can't bear to think that it is too perfect; a perfect country was never very attactive to me. It is too suggestive of ennui."

"That idea never occurred to me," Florence said.

"I thought of it long ago," Gifford continued, not very seriously, however, "and it troubled me quite a good deal until I came to the conclusion that paradise is only a myth. Of course all of the tired, overworked people in the world feel that they would like to rest forever, but we know that they would soon tire of it."

"Oh, I can easily believe that."

"Then if we are not to rest always we must have work—there must be difficulties to overcome. And the mere fact that we cannot always succeed in overcoming these difficulties is an added charm. A perfect world must be a world of trials, hardships and failures; in other words, must be an imperfect world. So you can see why I am so anxious not to get the impression that California is perfect."

"I suppose you would have to turn right around and come back if you did. But what will you do when you go to that other paradise?"

"Oh, they tell us that it is very easy to avoid," he said, laughing. Then he con-

tinued more seriously: "Do you not think the old Jewish idea of paradise—the pearly gates and gold-paved streets—a wicked mockery when compared with this beautiful world."

"I certainly will admit that those gorgeous gates and streets are the product of a very crude imagination, but I don't believe I can share your admiration for the imperfections of this world."

"That is because you have not been properly educated." This was said so good-naturedly that Florence smiled.

"The fault is such a common one," Gifford continued, "that it is almost universal. It is so nearly universal that it is dangerous to say that it is one of the results of the Christian religion; but it is certain that Christianity has aggravated it."

They were walking back and forth by the side of the train, enjoying the fresh air and exercise. As Gifford made this speech Florence drew a quick breath and looked at him with surprise.

"Oh," he said in answer to this, "I think the Christian religion has brought its blessings, but it certainly has produced some

disagreeable results. The inability to appreciate the Creative Power that exists in what are called the imperfections of the world, must be exaggerated by a world-scorning religion."

As Florence made no immediate reply, he thought he might have said too much. "Perhaps I am presuming on our short acquaintance," he said. "But judging from Balzac and Tolstoi that I have seen lying about your seat I may—well, you know that makes it seem a little more as though we were acquainted."

"But they don't teach that."

"No, but they are commonly condemned by the people who condemn such ideas; at least that has been my experience."

"My experience has been limited, but I have found very few people who condemn such writers as you mentioned."

"Is it possible! Well, I have been thrown in with an extremely religious class. But tell me," he said, for the first time during their conversation, becoming very much in earnest, "if such writers as Herbert Spencer, Tyndall and Huxly are condemned by the people you have known?"

"I can't tell you that, for I have seldom ever heard them mentioned."

"But you," he said, still very much in earnest, "you have not neglected them?"

"I'm afraid I have," Florence said, amused at his earnestness.

"You don't know what you have missed."

When the train was about to start the passengers hurriedly got on. Florence went to her seat and Gifford to the smoking room to fill a pipe. She thought how much his strong, original ideas corresponded with the thoughtful expression of his face. What he had said about the Christian religion surprised her, but it did not displease her. She had given but little thought to religion; although she could not be said to be a Christian, she had a great reverence for that religion, which caused her to feel surprised to hear it so emphatically condemned.

In his childhood and youth Gifford had been taken by the ears (as he expressed it), and thrust against the Christian religion. The more he was held up to it the more he disliked it. His father had early conceived the desire to make a clergyman of him. This was a strange (uncommon at least) desire

for a farmer. But Gifford senior was a man of superior intelligence. He not only had intelligence enough to make a success of his business—to make a fortune out of horses, but he could put his finger right on the cause of his success; the ability to manage men. With this in his mind, he had an idea that clergymen have the easiest place of all. Straightway he set to work to make a clergyman of his only son, James. Before James finished his theological course he became an agnostic. He had stumbled along to a great extent in his selection of books to read, but the hard hits his divinity professors aimed at Spencer, Tyndall and others aroused his curiosity rather than his prejudice against them; and once started on this course of reading the reference made in one book to others led him, until he read most of the great leaders of thought.

At first his father was greatly disappointed and disgusted with him for becoming, what he called, an atheist, and they had many long-drawn arguments, in which James usually came off with flying colors. The old gentleman would lose his temper, and James, having naturally a better con-

trol of his emotions, soon realized what an advantage it was and cultivated that talent. He had also the advantage of the experience he had gained at college, where he had stood almost alone among his fellow students. After many of these word battles Mr. Gifford gradually came around to James' way of thinking, and then went to the other extreme and wanted him to lecture. This success gave James more confidence, for he had a great deal of respect for his father, but being very modest, and judging by his experience at college that he had much of the world against him, he could not get his courage up to the point of lecturing. He compromised with his father by agreeing to write for publication, and had persuaded him that what he needed was to see more of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

The next day the scenery from the car window had changed from the smooth, rolling plains of Kansas to the stunted, cedar-covered hills of Central New Mexico. That attribute of novel environment that makes time seem long is also manifested in our acquaintance with the objects and people making it. To Florence, the car, and especially the seat where she sat with her valise, books and so forth, had acquired quite a homelike feeling and the people seemed more like old acquaintances than the strangers they were. This day through New Mexico and the one following through Arizona were passed very much as the day through Kansas. She and Gifford saw more of each other, and each thought the other improved upon closer acquaintance; but neither thought any better of the Snowdons as they learned to know them.

"If you want a good investment," Snowdon said to Gifford, "the Santa Margarita

ranch will just suit you. It is now in the hands of some San Francisco bank and can be bought cheap, I've no doubt. It is in San Diego County, and has twenty-seven million acres in it. It would make one of the finest horse ranches in the world. A friend of mine has his eye on a little scheme down there that he and I are going to spring onto the world some day. We are lying low now until everything is ripe, for we don't want anyone to get ahead of us. We are going to buy up the land along the Santa Margarita canon and throw a dam across it about seven hundred or a thousand feet high, and we will have one of the finest reservoirs in the world. The water can back up for a hundred miles. It is the finest reservoir site in the world—in fact it is ideal. The Santa Margarita river is the finest river of water in Southern California. The water is as clear as a crystal and ice cold; it is fed by the snows on the mountains. The San Jacinta peak where the Santa Margarita river has its principal source, is the highest mountain in the world as measured from the plains at its base. You can stand on its summit

any day of the year and throw a snowball into an orange grove at its foot."

"You can almost do that from the mountains back of Pasadena," Mrs. Snowdon said, "only they don't have snow on them in the summer time."

"Yes, they do," Snowdon contradicted, "only you can't see it from the plains. It is in the deep canons where the sun can't get at it."

"You don't know Captain Walker, do you?" he went on to Gifford. "If you will come to my office sometime I will send for him and introduce you. He's the man you want to go to if you want to buy any land. He owns land in every part of the state. He and I made a nice little deal at San Pedro once. He came to me and wanted to know if I wanted to go in with him, and I just happened to have fifty thousand lying in bank, so I wrote him a check for it. We cleared a cool fifty thousand apiece, and I never saw the property."

The fourth day from Chicago they were in California, but for several hours they saw nothing but desert. In the middle of the forenoon they turned south over the

mountains, and everyone was interested in the scenery. Gifford left the train at San Bernardino, as he wanted to begin at Redlands and see everything between there and the coast. He promised to make Mrs. Woodmanse a call, when he got into the neighborhood of Manzanita.

From San Bernardino to Los Angeles, Mrs. Snowdon tried to make herself useful to Florence by telling her the names of all of the stations and of all of the plants and trees they saw growing in the fields and orchards—explaining many things she did not understand herself.

As the train glided into Los Angeles and all the passengers were ready with valises strapped and their wraps on, to get off of the train, Mrs. Snowdon said to Florence: "Oh, you are just so impatient you can't wait." Florence's only reply was a smile. She thought that impatience was what Mrs. Snowdon would feel, and what almost any woman would feel; while what she felt was not impatience, but a dread that was akin to fear, because her husband seemed so much like a stranger to her.

While she was thinking this, John was

walking impatiently up and down the station platform in Los Angeles, looking at his watch every two minutes and putting it back into his pocket without seeing what time it was. When he looked down the track and could not see the train, he would hurry into the station and look at the bulletin to see if it could possibly be late. When he saw that there had been no change made in the bulletin, he would hurry out again to gaze once more down the track. He was the same John Woodmanse Florence's picture had shown: the perfect mouth and oval cheeks with the thin black side-whiskers, the straight, dark eyebrows and honest blue eyes, and a figure full of manly strength and beauty. He could scarcely realize that he was really married to his dear Florence, and that she was there, so near, coming to meet him.

When the train came at last and he caught a glimpse of her face at the window, he hurried into the car and caught her in his arms. When she saw his face again so full of happiness and felt him tremble as he held her in his arms, she, too, was kindled into a glow of happiness.

Before they left the train, Mrs. Snowdon came to them and said that she just must meet Doctor Woodmanse, as she had fallen so deeply in love with his wife, and hoped that they would see one another occasionally, as they were not going to live so very far apart.

The remaining eight miles to Manzanita John and Florence drove in John's buggy. But as it was the pleasantest part of the day, the drive in the open air was delightful. With a light running buggy and a willing horse they soon passed through the north part of Los Angeles and crossed the river to East Los Angeles. Turning north again, they were soon in the country—in the low-lying river bottom where the Arroyo Saca joins the Los Angeles river. After fording the river the road runs along on the foot of the high sage-brush covered hills, where the atmosphere is full of the fragrance of the shrubs. This was not the most direct road to Manzanita, but John had selected it because to him it was the most attractive. The high hills on one side and across the narrow valley on the other the hills breaking away into the high moun-

tains that seemed so near, and the strange, wild fragrance of the shrubs made Florence realize vividly that she was in a strange land.

"It seems as if I have been away from Chicago for years," she said.

"Does it?" asked John, laughing without reason. "Then perhaps you can imagine how long it seems to me that I have been away. And just before I saw you it seemed to me that I had not seen you for ten years, and now it seems as though I only parted from you yesterday."

Their faces shone with happiness, and as they glided over the smooth road their tongues moved rapidly to keep pace with the quick beating of their hearts.

CHAPTER V.

The Manzanita tract is a small village with a few hundred acres of the surrounding land divided into ten and twenty-acre fruit and garden farms. It is a part of the old Jesus Marie ranch, which lies high up on the southern slope of the Cahuenga mountains. From Los Angeles these mountains (being only eight miles away, while the higher mountains beyond are from thirty to forty) seem to deserve the name of mountains at least. But the valley rises so gradually into the plain, and the plain to the few knobs on its summit, that, as seen from this plain, what we had called mountains from a distance are nothing but a few round, sage-brush covered hills.

This high plain on which Manzanita is situated, affords a fine view of the surrounding country. To the north are the hills; to the west the valley leads to the ocean twenty miles away, where late in the afternoons it can be seen shining as bright as

the sun. A short distance east, the plain comes to a point and drops suddenly down to the Los Angeles river (a mere shadow of a stream after the water is taken out into the ditches that supply Los Angeles) that here, after trickling along under the dry sand at the northwest foot of the Cahuenga mountains and turning southeast along the foot of the mountains, continues on in that direction toward Los Angeles. Just beyond the river, Tropico, Glendale and Verdugo nestle at the foot of the mountains. Almost north of Glendale, through a gap in the smaller and nearer mountains can be seen Crescenta Canada, high up on the plain at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountains.

Farther to the east, and also beyond the first range of mountains, is Pasadena and the broad valley that leads off to the east. Southeast of Manzanita, across the narrow point of plain, the hills begin again and extend for a few miles, then jump the river and go on far away to the southeast and join the Santa Ana and Timascal mountains. At the point where the hills cross

the river, Los Angeles lies, partly on the hills and partly in the valley.

During the winter in Southern California, while the snow is on the mountains, the cold air sometimes settles down into the valleys while the air on the hills remains warm. However strange it may seem that the hills between the mountains and valleys should be warmer than either, nevertheless it is true. The temperature in the valleys never gets very low, but almost every winter it is enough to kill all except a few of the most hardy vegetables. A few degrees of heat when the thermometer gets near freezing, are of great value to the market gardeners and to people who like to grow out of doors the tender, tropical plants and trees which are so rare in the United States. Although the hills often escape frost when the valleys do not, it is doubtful if there are any that always escape. This plain on which Manzanita is situated has the reputation of being frostless; and this, together with the beauty of its location, made it a very desirable body of land to be divided into small farms.

The evening after Florence and John ar-

rived in Manzanita and had their supper at the Thompsons, where they were boarding, Clara and Minnie Thompson were in the kitchen washing the supper dishes. They were small but well developed; especially Minnie, who, although only sixteen, had thought herself a woman for several years. Clara, who was two years older, had been slower to develop physically, but quicker mentally. Minnie was washing the dishes and Clara drying them, and both were discussing Mrs. Woodmanse.

"I think she is lovely. Don't you?" Clara said with enthusiasm.

"No, I don't. Her eyes are too far apart. She isn't half as pretty as I expected to see her."

"I didn't notice that her eyes were too far apart. I don't believe I could tell in the least what she looks like, except that she just looks divine; especially when she looked at me and smiled."

"She never looked at me."

"No wonder—you never said a word."

"I never can think of anything to say to strangers."

"Just say the first thing you think of.

But Mrs. Woodmanse didn't seem like a stranger to me. I was scared nearly to death when I went in, but I forgot all about it in a minute."

After placing some dishes on the shelf, Clara went on with the same enthusiasm. "I think she looks intellectual. Don't you?"

"You are always talking of intellectual people," Minnie said with contempt.

"Well, you can be mighty sure no one will ever accuse you of anything so terrible."

"I don't care; I have more company than you do."

"Yes, and such company," Clara sneered. "Charley Sales the beautiful, rosy-cheeked blacksmith."

"I don't care; you thought Charley was pretty, too, when you first saw him."

"Perhaps I did, but when I got acquainted with him and saw how ignorant and selfish he was, I had no more use for him. If I were mamma, I wouldn't let you go with him."

"I don't see anything to be ashamed of in being a blacksmith; and he's just as good as your old preacher."

"Blacksmithing is honorable enough, but ignorance and selfishness are not. You ought to be made to stop going with him, that's all."

"Well, I guess you're not the boss of me."

Minnie had a great respect for Clara's superior intellect, as she had always been taught to regard it, but she was independent enough to hold to her own opinions when it pleased her, and was too good-natured to take offense at Clara's criticisms.

Clara thought her sharp words an evidence of her intellect, and had very little regard for Minnie's opinions. When she was younger, it was her highest ambition to be considered scornful; she had thought it a very high ambition. She could imagine the other school children saying of her: "Isn't she scornful?" which was her heart's greatest delight. Perhaps at eighteen she had not entirely outgrown this childish vanity, but the only trace noticeable of it was her innocent habit of sneering. From what she said a few minutes later when the dishes were almost finished, her childish love for being overawed, it seemed, she had not entirely left behind. "I expected her

to be proud and haughty and to put on airs; to quirl her little finger when she held her fork or teacup and to flash her diamonds in your eyes and to stare you down if you presumed to say anything."

"That's just like you, to build all kinds of air castles about her. I think you had made up your mind before she came to worship her. You don't do anything but build air castles and read Mrs. Holmes' novels."

Doctor Woodmanse had left the supper table this evening before the rest finished their supper, and after fidgeting around for awhile, he decided to go to his office as he had been away almost all day, and there might be some urgent call for him. Mr. Thompson also went out after supper, and Mrs. Thompson took Florence into the parlor, while the girls washed the dishes.

Mrs. Thompson was small, like her daughters, but otherwise it was difficult to see any resemblance. They certainly did not inherit their good looks from her. Her eyes seemed bulging out of her head, and she held her head on one side and laughed a simpering little laugh, doubtless from embarrassment, when she talked.

"We have to do all of our own work yet," she said, "but he says as soon as he can sell some real estate we will not be so cramped. We never had to take boarders before, but he wanted to go in to this speculation because Captain Walker thinks it is such a big thing. He thinks Captain Walker the smartest man he ever knew."

Florence succeeded in guessing that "he" was Mr. Thompson, and she knew that Captain Walker was the man who owned most of the tract.

"I think it is all right for girls to know how to work, but I don't like to have them spend too much time in the kitchen."

"Oh, the work will not hurt them," Florence said confidently. "You have such beautiful, bright-looking daughters."

Mrs. Thompson smiled with great pleasure and said, "I suppose every crow must think her little crows the blackest."

"I think your older daughter is the prettiest girl I ever saw." This was said with such sincerity that Mrs. Thompson's heart was touched in its tenderest spot and she was ready to confide what she would not have told to a much older acquaintance.

"I am prouder of her intellect than I am of her good looks. I don't say it in a boastful way, but I doubt if her conversational ability can be equaled any where." Her head raised up from one side and dropped over to the other as she said this, and she laughed with embarrassment and pleasure. "She was always ahead of her classes in the Ventura high school where she graduated, and her music teacher said he never knew anyone to learn so fast. People tell me that I haven't but one child and that one is Clara; but I love Minnie, too, but she never loved her books, and we couldn't keep her at them."

Clara and Minnie soon came into the parlor. The latter sat meekly down in a corner, while Clara, although showing that she was extremely timid, began to talk. Her embarrassment and determination to overcome it, excited her and made her appear to better advantage.

"You haven't seen much of Manzanita yet," she said to Florence, "but when you do, you will see that we have a lovely little village."

"I am expecting a great deal from what

Doctor Woodmanse has written me about it."

"You had better be careful, Clara, and not say too much, or she may be disappointed," meekly suggested Mrs. Thompson.

"She can't expect too much," said Clara. "It is such a perfect spot and the people are nice. There are a number you will like, I know."

"People are coming in here from all over," Mrs. Thompson said. "He thinks 'twill make a great city some day."

"My first impression has been a very pleasant one," said Florence.

"It's a beastly little place, and the people are horrid," Minnie said with a sneer. She had learned this sneering of Clara, as she thought it was this and her sarcastic remarks that made people think Clara bright.

"We have three nice churches, so you can take your choice," Clara said.

"What church did you attend in Chicago?" asked Mrs. Thompson.

"None, most of the time, and almost any occasionally," said Florence laughing. Perhaps with some sense of guilt produced by

her knowledge of what others expected and not from her idea of what was right.

"Oh, if I lived in Chicago," said Clara, "I would want to go to church all the time to hear the music."

"You will have to go to church here," tittered Minnie, "for there is no place else to go."

"That is so," assented Clara, smiling. Florence sighed and they all laughed and felt better acquainted.

"Clara, can't we have some music?" Mrs. Thompson asked.

"Yes, play 'Smith's March,'" said Minnie, tittering again.

"Perhaps Mrs. Woodmanse plays," said Clara. "We would rather hear her."

"No, I never play, but I would like very much to hear you."

Clara went bravely to the piano and played the march Minnie had mentioned, determined not to be laughed down because her pieces were old; and when her mother asked for a song, she sang an old one and played the accompaniment. Her voice was very sweet. Although she knew her education was not the great thing her mother

thought it, she felt rather proud of it, for she knew it was much better than the education of many of her friends; several of whom could have had better opportunities if they had wished.

Turning around from the piano, she said: "One can wear summer clothes all winter here in Manzanita."

"Down in Los Angeles they wear their winter clothes all summer," Minnie said.

"Yes, some of them do," assented Clara, "nearly all summer; and some of them wear their summer clothes nearly all winter. If you wear your summer clothes and carry a parasol, you must walk on the sunny side of the street; and if you wear your winter clothes and furs you must walk on the shady side of the street."

"It's no uncommon sight to see little boys barefooted there on the streets all winter long," said Mrs. Thompson.

"Before we came from back East we thought it rained all winter out here," said Clara.

"Back East?" Minnie repeated.

"Yes, back East. I don't care if Iowa is out West to people in some parts of the

country, it is back East from here." This was said with spirit, but there was no sign of anger in it.

Mrs. Thompson looked at Florence with her face aglow with pride, and Clara continued:

"One day in Los Angeles, Minnie heard a woman sneer at some people for calling Missouri or some of those states in there 'back East.' I suppose that woman must have been from Boston, and thinks that that is the East."

"Perhaps she thought there was an East pole in Boston somewhere," Florence suggested.

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Woodmanse found the atmosphere in Manzanita all that she could desire. It was late autumn or early winter, when the sea breezes had ceased to blow with such regularity and the rains had not yet begun. The days were calm and warm like a prolonged Indian summer. While the days were so beautiful and the country was still a novelty to Florence, John often took her with him as he drove about the country to see his patients. The climate and country were still a novelty to him, and he spent most of his time telling her how perfect the weather had been all of the previous year.

One morning after a quick drive of a mile or more, and while they were still on the Manzanita tract, John stopped to see a patient while Florence waited in the buggy in front of the house. It was a small, three-roomed house, built of rough lumber and whitewashed. All about the house were

great masses of geraniums, lantanis, heliotrope and many other flowering plants, besides palms and bananas. All along the street were eucalyptus trees in a single row with their straight, strong trunks and long, graceful branches. How peaceful it all seemed in the calm morning sunshine.

Columbus Beveredge, who owned this æsthetic little home, was hoeing in the garden, and seeing Mrs. Woodmanse waiting in the buggy, he sauntered out to the road and asked her if she would not get out and make them a call. Tall, with broad, square shoulders, narrow hips, a shambling walk and lazy talk, he was a picture of indolent indifference. His clothes were clean but cheap: a hickory shirt, jean trousers, heavy, cow-hide shoes, and without coat or vest. His face was clean shaved, except a mustache that had been cut back with the scissors, until it stood straight out from his lip. Although his face was red, it became redder as he blushed like a school-boy when he first addressed Mrs. Woodmanse. He had a great fondness for the weaker sex, and was anxious to get acquainted with "Doc's bride." With his big, kind blue

eyes and perfect, white teeth, he had a very attractive countenance as he stood there leaning on his hoe, chatting pleasantly with Florence until Woodmanse came out. He asked her how she liked the country, and if she had ever been in California before. They talked about Manzanita and about his ten acres.

"Yes, it makes a very pretty home," he admitted; "but its no use trying to make a living out of it. If it wasn't for our chickens I don't know what we'd do. I worked ten years as foreman on a large stock farm down near Santa Ana, and saved enough to buy this place. I have worked just as hard the five years I have been here, and we have hardly had enough to eat and to wear."

"Perhaps you don't understand managing a small place as well as you do a larger one," suggested Florence.

Beveredge laughed incredulously, and Florence felt that she must explain.

"Well, you have to raise different things on a small place, don't you?"

"Yes, that's true. And there seems to be work enough, but we don't produce any-

thing. We might if we had water enough, but we haven't, and never will have, I suppose.

"Down there," he continued, with a jerk of his head toward Santa Ana, "we didn't have to have water. It was damp land, and we could grow anything we wanted to without irrigating at all."

"I thought they always had to irrigate in California," said Florence.

"Oh, no, we don't. Not on those damp lands. We would grow great crops of corn and pumpkins and not plant them until a month after the last rain. And we would grow five or six crops of alfalfa in one year and all the best crops were cut after the rains."

"That must be a very desirable country for a farmer to live in," said Florence.

"It is a fine country for the farmer, but it is very unhealthy. Molly never had any health down there, and I thought she would be better up here. She thinks she is better, but I don't see that she is, much."

"Good health is worth making sacrifices for, and perhaps your place will make you more when it is older."

"The trees ought to bear more when they are older, but if we can't get anything for the fruit what difference does it make? I know a man over in Glendale that boxed and shipped a carload of fruit East, and the expense of boxing, shipping and selling was about twice as much as the fruit sold for."

"That isn't very encouraging."

"I have heard of a good many such cases. They think that the fruit buyers here are robbing them by not giving them enough for their fruit, but I think I would rather take a little here than to come out with less than nothing." He then laughed and said: "But I needn't worry about selling my fruit, because I can't raise any to sell. If it were as easy to get water as Old Man Williams thinks it is, we might. He thinks all we have to do is to dig a hole in one of those hills and the water will pour out; but it don't pour out of the holes we already have, and Walker is not going to dig any more. He told us all that there was an abundance of water before we bought. Well, we've got our place paid for; if it wasn't for that, I don't know what we'd do. I

don't see how these men that have only paid a few hundred down on theirs can ever hope to pay for them."

As Woodmanse came from the house he heard what Beveredge was saying, and said: "I think you had better go in and take a dose of your wife's medicine, Beveredge, you need it more than she does. I might give you a good dose of Indian remedy; perhaps that would stop you from looking down your nose."

"You will have a pretty hard time, Doc, if you are going to keep the people on this tract from looking down their noses," he said with a good-natured grin. Then he said to Florence: "Captain Walker keeps Doc and Thompson up here to keep the people from dying with the blues; and then he comes up once or twice a week to cheer up his lieutenants. But, Doc, your cheering up Perry didn't do much good."

"Why, what's the matter with Perry?"

"He moved away yesterday; that's what's the matter with him."

"Did he lose his place?"

"He lost everything. The improvements he had put on the place and payments and

all. He went away without a cent, with a wife and four children to support. He makes about the twelfth since I came onto the tract."

"Well, they ought to manage differently," said Woodmanse.

"That's what Walker says. You see, Mrs. Woodmanse, he has taught his lieutenants what to say."

Woodmanse blushed scarlet at this thrust, but Beveredge laughed and went on: "The best managing they could do would be to steer clear of Walker."

As the Woodmanses drove away, John could not think of anything to say to disguise how much what Beveredge had said was hurting him. He had never had the reasons for thinking Walker dishonest that the rest of the people on the Manzanita tract had, and he had thought it right to do what he could for the prosperity of the community. To be sure, Captain Walker had always been the one to point out to him what was best for the community, and this made it appear that he was nothing but a tool for the dishonest Walker. He had first met him as he came to California. Walker

got on the train at San Bernardino and soon entered into conversation with Woodmanse in that easy, confidential way he had of approaching strangers.

Woodmanse had felt courage enough when he left Chicago, but as he neared this strange land he became more timid—more doubtful of his ability to find a good location. But after talking with Walker for half an hour, he became thoroughly convinced that Manzanita was the very place he was looking for, which greatly relieved him. An honest man sometimes finds it to his advantage to work with a dishonest one. This was true of John Woodmanse's early experience in Manzanita. He found a good practice from the beginning, but he hoped for it to be made better as Walker settled up the country.

And Walker had need of some good, honest men that he could control, to lead the people in the direction he wanted them to go. He was not satisfied with making these people pay twice for water that was not a tenth of the quantity that he represented it to be, but he wanted a town-hall and he wanted them to build it; and he wanted

a school-house and this, too, they must build. He also wanted a dummy line from Los Angeles, and various other things that he expected to squeeze out of these patient people. Thompson, the real estate agent in Manzanita, was his slave; and Hanna, the general merchant and postmaster, could easily be managed. Woodmanse was soon made one of the directors of the Water Company and a school trustee. With these three men under his control he could manage the rest.

During Woodmanse's first year in Manzanita, the town hall was built and the school-house begun. The six thousand-dollar school bond the district first voted, the county trustees decided illegal, as it was too great for the assessed value of the property. A bond of four thousand was then voted, and Walker had to be satisfied with a four-thousand-dollar school-house.

Walker was such a shrewd and fluent talker that, to Woodmanse, an illiterate man like Beveredge seemed a dolt in comparison. And the little the latter had said to Florence only irritated John, because he could not think of anything to say to refute

it. But Florence began to talk of other things, and asked him how he found his patient.

"Oh, she is one of the kind I can do nothing for, except to give her a tonic. She's not half as sick as she thinks she is. If she had a husband who was less kind to her—one who would make her get up and go to work—she would be better off."

"He seems very much dissatisfied."

"He talks just that way to everybody. He has offered his place for sale, and to everyone who comes to look at it he tells what he supposes to be the exact truth about it, and they soon get the idea that it is worth nothing and leave. But for all that he talks so badly about it, he holds as stiff a price as any one."

After driving about a mile, the Woodmanses stopped at the Brownings, who had a sick child that John wanted to see. Florence, as before, sat in the buggy while he went in.

At the last corner they had turned and but a few steps from where they stopped, there was a four-inch hydrant open, and the water was roaring out into a ditch that

ran along by the side of the road in front of the house, then turned into a field which was planted to garden truck. A young man, bare-footed, with trowsers rolled to his knees, was turning the water in between the rows of vegetables. With a shovel he cut channels in the side of the ditch which was slightly higher than the surface of the land, and let the water flow into the rows that had not been wet, and stopped up channels where the rows were sufficiently watered.

Near the head of the ditch, where the hydrant stood, a man was standing when the Woodmanses passed, whom John had spoken to as Mr. Browning. He was a small man, past middle age, with a long, crooked stemmed pipe in his mouth and a chew of tobacco in one cheek. He, too, had a shovel in his hands and was watching for gopher holes in the ditch as Florence learned afterward. As he came nearer the buggy, Florence felt a desire to know if he took as gloomy a view of the tract as Beveredge.

"You seem to be getting plenty of water," she said.

Browning deliberately took the pipe from

between his teeth, spit into the ditch, then said: "Yes, ma'am, we're getting a pretty good flow this morning."

"Don't you get that much every morning?"

"Oh, we don't get the water every morning."

Florence did not suppose that they needed to water their ground like that every morning, but she did not think it necessary to explain what she meant, especially as he went on to tell her the way in which they did get the water.

"We have to take our turns, and only two or three hydrants are allowed open on the tract at a time. The flow we get depends a great deal upon what other hydrants are open at the same time. If it is lower down the slope than ours, they get almost all the water; if it is higher up, we get the most. But if it is on some other branch of the pipe line, it affects ours very little. That is the way they try to arrange it, with just one hydrant open on a pipe line at a time."

"You don't get as much as you want, then?"

"Oh, no, ma'am. We could use more; but we will have more as soon as we get another tunnel done."

By asking a few questions Florence got him to talk of his truck patches, which he seemed very proud of and glad to talk about. He had made several hundred dollars off of this patch of cucumbers and several hundred more off of that patch of squashes. He always spoke of dollars in the hundreds, and estimated his berries and other fruits by the ton; he had sold so many tons of strawberries and so many tons of blackberries last year, and expected to gather so many tons this year. When Florence told John of this, he said: "Well, he knows how to manage," and felt that he had redeemed himself from what Beveredge said. But they were to learn a few weeks later that this man Browning was the next to lose his place. At this time, he was going about everywhere bragging, and all the time trying to sell his place to save a few dollars out of the wreck.

CHAPTER VII.

The Woodmanses left the Manzanita tract and drove north toward Old Man Williams'; the road led up a long point of the level plain that extends between the hills, and to Florence seemed to stop. If there had been any blue in the atmosphere, the different degrees of blueness would have shown that the hill that swept around from their left was much farther away in front of them than the one from the right. But the atmosphere of California is so clear that it seemed one continuous hill sweeping around in front of them, and the only way to get out would be to turn back. While Florence was lazily enjoying the warm sunshine and idly wondering what John could be driving up into that point for, they passed the Manzanita Water Company's reservoir, which was merely a little basin scooped out of the hillside for the water to collect in, from the open ditch, to be carried away in the iron pipes to the tract. A short

distance beyond this a little valley suddenly opened up to the right, and grape-vines took the place of barley stubble. In the distance could be seen a house among olive and lemon trees, and beyond the house on the hills were groves of eucalyptus trees. The horse trotted swiftly along, and the Woodmanses' hearts were as serene as the calm, warm atmosphere.

Although the little valley gradually rises as it advances into the hills, the hills drop so suddenly down to meet it, and the angle formed is so abrupt, it makes the valley seem to drop gently down toward the hills. This delusion is doubtless exaggerated by the perfect transparency of the atmosphere. Ever since they had got onto the open plain after leaving Manzanita, Florence thought they were driving down a gentle incline; so that when they came to an open ditch full of water by the side of the road, the water seemed to be running madly up the slope to meet them. After staring at this in idle amazement for a short time scarcely able to believe her eyes, she said: "Does all the water in this country run up hill?" Their laugh was one of happy amusement.

"That is one of the sights of California," said John.

When the grape-vines gave way to strawberry beds, they saw a young man standing in the ditch of water, while an old man was handing him bunches of weeds and grass, which he shoved down deep into the water with a spade. Again the Woodmanses laughed like happy children.

"What in the world are they doing?" asked Florence.

"They have found a gopher hole, I guess," John replied, and they laughed again.

The older man's face beamed with pleasure when he saw the Woodmanses. His face was covered with an uncombed, untrimmed beard which he rubbed one way across his face—mustache and all; the mustache on the left side of his nose was standing out obliquely to the right across his mouth.

"Good morning, Doc," he called in a loud, harsh voice.

"You are hard at work," John said.

"Yes, I'm always at work. Between the gophers and a lot of worthless boys and Chinamen, it keeps me pretty busy."

Jumping over the ditch, he started to walk by the side of the buggy.

"I'll go to the house with you. So this's your wife, is it? Well, Doc, you've got a fine looking woman."

As he trudged along by the side of the buggy he talked all the time loud enough to have been heard half a mile. At the house, nothing would do but Doc's wife must go in too. In the house they met Mrs. Williams, a sweet faced old lady, and Etta (Mrs. Pete Williams), as Mrs. Williams called her. Etta was a pimpley, red-faced, young woman, in a red Mother Hubbard wrapper; on each side of which could be seen just how far her arms reached by the dirty stripes where she had rubbed her soiled hands. Doctor Woodmanse went into a small room, at one side of the larger one which they first entered, and where they had given Mrs. Woodmanse a seat. Mrs. Pete Williams' sick child was in the second room, but as both grandparents followed Woodmanse in to see what he thought of the child, Mrs. Pete remained just outside of the door, in the larger room, not wishing to desert Mrs. Woodmanse entirely.

The old couple were soon engaged in a quarrel, each blaming the other because the doctor's directions had not been followed exactly. As their voices grew loud and harsh, and they freely called each other names, Mrs. Pete looked at Mrs. Woodmanse and smiled her embarrassment. When the Doctor pronounced the patient much better the old people flew to the other extreme. In their joy they insisted that Doc and his wife must stay for dinner. Florence and John tried to decline, but the Williams would listen to no excuse, and as Woodmanse would do anything rather than displease the people among whom he wished to practice, they stayed.

In many ways, Mrs. Williams seemed quite a lady. While the younger woman was preparing the dinner, she sat down by Florence and soon made her forget her first impression. She talked very intelligently about the country and the people in Manzanita.

On the other side of the room, Old Man Williams was talking loudly and earnestly to Woodmanse about the necessity of developing more water; and his talk was

plentifully interspersed with oaths. He could not express himself strongly enough without the use of them. In every word the Old Man said and every movement he made it was evident that he lived at high pressure all of the time. Florence wondered what this sweet-faced, intelligent old lady might have been if she had lived with another man. But as far as that was concerned, the Old Man's face was not disagreeable; in fact, at his best moments he too might well be called sweet-faced, and he had shown a great deal of love for their grandchild. At the dinner table, the Williams all talked very earnestly (to express it mildly) about the water. Their habitual discord again came to the front; before the dinner was finished they had many jarring words, and Florence thought if these people had spent more of their wonderful energy to change the inner man to suit the world and left that world more as they found it, they might have been happier. She afterward asked John if he thought they could ever be like that when they grew old, and John's only reply was a hearty laugh; he could not

think that they could ever be otherwise than as happy as they were.

The Old Man told the Woodmanses a part of the history of the Manzanita tract, taking much credit to himself. He gave John the impression that he was an illiterate old braggart; but to Florence he appeared to be a man of actions as well as words. He had bought his land a number of years before the tract was laid out, and it was he who had pointed out the desirableness of this tract of land for division to one of the men who afterward formed the company to buy it. He also gave it the reputation of being frostless. Soon after he had bought his land he built a large barn and a small house of the same material and make, and after clearing off the sage brush commenced to farm it for barley. The first year he noticed that a few sickly tomato plants, which had succeeded in resisting the summer's drouth, took new life after the first fall rains, and bore fruit all winter. The Old Man began to make a noise about these tomatoes immediately; and the next winter saw a large patch of them on his ranch, and his rickety old wagon in Los Angeles twice

a week where he disposed of his tomatoes at a high price and his loud talk for nothing.

To the tomatoes were soon added summer squashes and a long list of vegetables and berries. Then water was needed, for the winter season is fickle. The rain does not always come when wanted. Sometimes the winter is almost gone before it comes at all; and sometimes it rains enough to germinate the seeds, but not enough to keep them growing.

He had a small spring from under one of the hills, and this he used as far as it would go, then he commenced to tunnel into the hill. Into this tunnel all of his money went, and still he was not satisfied; he must have more water. He still lived in his little house (boarded up and down with rough lumber and the cracks unslatted) with his wife and large family of grown sons, and would willingly have given his last piece of bread to anyone who would work to lengthen that tunnel. His was the faith that moves mountains.

When the Manzanita Land Company was bemoaning its fate because the land did not

sell, Williams, haunting its office continually when in Los Angeles, talked water.

"You need never expect to sell without water," so he declared. This talk in time bore fruit, and they bought the old man's water and some other small pieces of land that had little springs and seeps on them. Into these they tunneled. A reservoir was built and pipes laid over their tract to distribute the water. It had to be taken across Williams' land to the tract, and for this, and the land that produced the water, he was to get a certain proportion of the water. He had a clause inserted into the contract which was drawn up by his attorney to the effect that they were to develop all the water he wanted. This clause the company afterward claimed they overlooked when they signed the agreement. Thus the Old Man had done good work for himself while helping the tract. With this wealthy company between him and the unlimited amount of water that he thought was in those hills he would have all he wanted; enough to put all of his land that was below the water in berries and vegetables.

Although the company spent what they

thought was a large amount of money and made a number of tunnels, there was but very little water developed; little in proportion to the amount of land to be irrigated. Williams was talking more water at all times. He and Mrs. Williams quarreled over it at all times of the day and night just as they had for years. After going to bed they would quarrel until they fell asleep, and wake up at any time of the night and begin again. She had always insisted that he was wasting all he made trying to develop water, and when he talked of selling to the company she insisted that he was giving away what water he had. But water to him was a gold mine; he was a man with but one idea at a time, and that idea was always put immediately into action. As the Water Company did not develop as much water as he wished, he diverted its share into his ditches on the sly and used it as his own. Of course he was caught at this and stopped, but this did not prevent his doing it again.

CHAPTER VIII.

All of the members of the Ladies' Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which Mrs. Thompson was a member, called on Florence; not in a body, but by ones and twos and even threes. All were more or less self-conscious, as they had so few calls to make. Some of them she found very modest, intelligent ladies, while others were extremely ignorant, though apparently all the more self-important; but most of them were merely unattractive and difficult to entertain.

Mrs. Hanna, the wife of the postmaster and general merchant, Florence admired more than any of the many whom she met. She was a woman with a great deal of natural ability, well read and modest, and had a great deal of ambition for her daughter Nellie. Nellie, or Nell Hanna as everyone chose to call her, was a sweet, modest girl. Although intelligent, she had but little to say when she called with her mother.

She was becomingly and beautifully dressed; Florence thought she had never seen anyone dressed in better taste.

Everything with John Woodmanse was tributary to his profession, and as the Methodist Episcopal Church had the largest membership, and he thought it to his advantage to attach himself to some church so that he would be thrown with the best people, he selected it. Although he never really joined the church, he attended regularly, especially when he first came to Manzanita, and had been a conspicuous member of all the church business committees. The greatest pleasure he derived from his attendance was to have someone come to the church door and say that Doctor Woodmanse was wanted, or to tip-toe in and whisper to him if he were sitting next to the aisle, and for him to have to get up and walk out during services and attract everyone's attention.

The man who would attach himself to the church merely for policy, to many people would be very despicable. There are many people, however, who would be bold enough to say that if all that class of men withdrew

from the church there would not be many left; and there are a few who would go so far as to say that the ministers who run after such men as Woodmanse, as men of importance, to get them to join their churches, are none the less despicable.

Mr. Gooddale, the minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Manzanita, was "hail-fellow-well-met" with John, and loafed about his office quite often when in Manzanita. He was very proud to feel that he had secured this prize for his church, when the ministers of the other churches, who were much older and more experienced men than he, would like so much to have him. He also had the Hannas and Thompson's family (Thompson attended none of the churches) as members of his church. He made Hanna's and Thompson's his stopping places when in Manzanita, for he lived in University, where he had not yet completed his course at college.

Florence was in John's office, where she idled quite often when he was there, when she first met Mr. Gooddale. She saw him from the window as he came striding that way from the store. He was a large, thick-

bodied young man, with a clerical coat buttoned up to his throat, a large, rather florid, clean-shaved face, and thick, pouchy lips that alone would have given him a pompous expression. He wore a little soft felt hat on top of his great shock of yellow hair.

"Good morning, Doctor," he said, coming in and shaking hands with John. "And this is Mrs. Woodmanse?" he said, as John introduced him to Florence. "We have been looking for you for a long time. We need some one to give tone to the society in our little village, and there is no one so well calculated to do it as the village doctor and his wife."

At this John and Florence smiled politely.

"Mrs. Thompson tells me (I have just come from the Thompson's) that you have met some of the ladies of our village. They are not quite so ignorant as one might suppose."

"Oh, no," said Florence, "I did not find them ignorant at all. In fact, if I had thought about it before, which I had not, I think I would have been surprised to find them so intelligent."

Mr. Gooddale's smile was rather condescending as he said: "Well, I hope your first impression will not be spoiled."

"I hope not; but it isn't often that I change my first impression of people. Mrs. Hanna and Mrs. Thompson and their daughters I like very much."

"They are very worthy people. Miss Clara I think would make a very intelligent woman if she were thrown into the right kind of society."

"Yes, indeed; she is that now."

"I hope you are right. And of course I don't want to say anything against the people here; they are all worthy people, but their lives are narrow, of course."

"Oh, doubtless; but are not people's lives narrow everywhere? At least that is the impression I have got from what little I have learned."

"Oh, there are degrees—there must be degrees. Now in Chicago you must have had better opportunities. With the many large churches there you could hear the best divines every Sunday. Of course we have just as good ministers out here on the coast as they have the other side of

the mountains; but in a little place like this you cannot expect to find them."

"No, no, Gooddale," John said, "we won't take a back seat for anyone."

"Well, the villages are good places for the young men to begin in the ministry, as well as in the practice of medicine. And I hope Mrs. Woodmanse will not miss very much the opportunities she had in Chicago. If she does not come in contact with as great minds perhaps she will find something else to take their place."

"It seems to me," Florence said, "if we wish to associate with great minds we have to do it in books. There are only a few really great minds living at any one time, and we cannot all be personally acquainted with them; and even if we were, we would find their best thoughts in their books."

"To me books are dull companions," said Gooddale. "I am anxious to finish my college course and have my education completed, so that I will be perfectly equipped to go out and battle in the world."

"The real world is my holt," said John.

"Ah, yes; give me the real world," said

Gooddale, extending his arms. "I am anxious to strike out in it."

"To be sure, if we could have but one," Florence said, "we would all choose the real world; but we have to resort to books to add to our personal experience. And I can't think a man very perfectly educated who gives up books when he has completed his college course." Florence blushed as she added the last, thinking she might be saying too much.

"Some men," Gooddale answered, "study books all their lives, and yet in practical life they are nothing but blanks; while others with no book learning at all make themselves immortal."

"That is true, but both are exceptions. The bookworm who fails practically doubtless lacks something that is very essential to practical life; extreme timidity may have been his cause of failure. And the man who succeeds without books could doubtless succeed much better with them. The learning of the greatest minds that have ever lived would certainly be an assistance to anyone; and we can only get it from books."

"Oh, of course we need an education. If

I did not think that, I would not be spending these long years in college. But even in college it is not the fellows that grind most over their books that get along best; but it is the fellows that have native ability enough to know what to do in the right place. I would never have been what I am to-day if I had ground at my books as some fellows do; but I made friends with the professors, and now the president of the college slaps me on the back and treats me like a man. He knows I will have some influence some day. And I have friends in conference, too. Lots of the boys would like to have had this place, but they are not in it when Gooddale is around. Woodmanse knows that a man has to make friends if he wants to succeed."

"That's just right. In my profession, at least, one can't neglect a single opportunity."

"Well, I hope," Florence said, "that you don't think that the most important part of your profession."

"It is the most important part if one wishes to succeed," John said.

But John Woodmanse did himself an injustice by thus associating himself with

Gooddale. What he meant was, that after a man knows his profession thoroughly, to make friends was the most important aid to get a practice. John Woodmanse knew his profession thoroughly; not only that, but he was thoroughly suited to his profession. He was extremely thorough in execution—thorough to the minutest detail. This disposition to feel the great importance of small things was what made him such a great physician later in life.

CHAPTER IX.

When John had no professional calls to make, he and Florence often took a long drive. As the mountain roads, with their rugged scenery, wild flowers and strong smelling shrubs seemed more typical of California, they always chose one of them. The Cahuenga pass was one of their favorites, but the Verdugo Canon to Cresenta Canada they thought they liked better. Sometimes after driving up the Verdugo Canon they turned off by La Canada to Pasadena, where they got dinner and drove back home by East Los Angeles.

One evening they were coming back from Pasadena and Florence said: "These drives are delightful, but I'm afraid we ought not to take so many; you will lose all of your practice."

"I've always spent a good part of my time driving around like this," John answered.

"Oh, I thought you were so devoted to your profession."

"I am," said John, amused at her innocence, "and this is the way I get my practice. If I spent any time sitting around the office, people would think I had nothing to do and would never send for me. But if they see me driving around over the country they think I am awfully busy, and if everybody else wants me they must have me, too."

"Is that what you learned in the medical college? I thought you used to tell me that the practice of medicine was such a noble profession."

"I can't help it if the people are made that way. I must have a practice, let it cost what it will. But that is one of the old tricks of the trade."

"Why can't you practice the nobler part, and let the tricks alone?" Florence asked. But John went on without heeding what she said.

"I've known doctors to brag all the time that they were so busy they hardly had time to eat. And I heard of one that never even put a sign up on his office because the people just worked him to death; but of

course he took pains to tell it everywhere he went."

"Oh, I supposed there were some tricky men in the profession, but I also thought there were some honest ones," Florence said with a side glance at John. He laughed, taking her good-natured thrust good naturedly.

"There are an abundance of opportunities for a doctor to be dishonest. Sometimes we are compelled to be dishonest, and often to our own disadvantage; a great many people think they are sick when there is nothing at all the matter with them, and we are compelled to go to see them; some are able to pay, some are not."

"Well, you don't have to go to see people who can pay and won't, do you?"

"There are precious few times I am called that I can be absolutely sure of getting my pay; and there are a good many that I can be almost sure that I will not get it. But what hurts the most is to be called out in the middle of the night to see some chronic that I know I can't help and that I can feel pretty sure I will never get any pay for. Of course there are times when we do get

pay for such cases; but without the satisfaction of knowing that we are doing good the money is poor pay; especially when we know that they need their money more for other things."

Florence did not know whether she admired John more or less after this talk. She had the prejudice that impractical people have against the makeshift conscience of people that are in more direct contact with the world. She admired him very much for what he had said at the last, but she could not get over the feeling that it was very small to make a false show for the sake of getting a practice.

The moon in its first quarter was low in the west, and the road lay in the shadow except occasionally where there was a break in the high hills, but the hills on the other side of the valley stood out in the white light. Driving for some time in silence, as they often did, Florence was thinking of something that had been in her mind quite often.

"Don't you think it would be pleasanter to keep house than it is to board?" she began.

"Yes, I do; and we will just as soon as I get able. I have been looking forward to it all this time."

"It wouldn't cost a great deal more and—"

"It would to get the things we would have to have to begin," John interrupted. "I can collect money enough as we go along to meet our board bills, but I can't get much ahead yet."

"Well, I want to use some of my money—I want to use some of it so that we can both enjoy it. The best way I can think of is to buy a lot—the one next to your office would suit me—and build a house."

"Do you think of building?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"Oh, there is no reason; I had always thought of buying furniture and renting a house as soon as I got able, and I suppose the thought had become so fixed in my mind that I couldn't change it."

"I want the house, so we can build it just to suit us; and the lot, too, so we can have flowers as everyone else does here. The Thompsons are very pleasant people to

board with, but a boarding house can never be a home to me."

"Well, I have no doubt you do feel that way. I am out at my practice so much it doesn't make so much difference to me. I am glad you can do as you wish and won't have to wait for me—it seems impossible for me to collect from these people; they say that they are making nothing."

CHAPTER X.

The men that had laid out the Manzanita tract found it a dead weight on their hands. After trying for several years they had only succeeded in selling a few pieces.

One day a stranger sauntered into their office, and, after making a few remarks about things in general, the conversation drifted around to Southern California, and the Manzanita tract in particular. He was a tall man and wore a linen duster, crumpled until it was as flimsy as an old rag, and a straw hat. Although his belly was conspicuous, his legs and shoulders were thin; one shoulder was carried considerably higher than the other and one eye was blind, or apparently so. His flabby cheeks and chin had a beard of a day's growth on them, and his whole face was a sickly yellow. His smile was very sweet, but seemed weary like the smile of an invalid entertaining a tiresome caller. His talk was so smooth he soon made these men be-

lieve that their Land and Water Company was worth next to nothing. He really seemed to assert nothing, but made them admit it, little by little, with his, "And you think so and so, don't you?" Before leaving he suddenly sprung an offer onto them for the whole tract of land and water. It was so extremely low they indignantly refused to consider it; but that did not hinder them from talking it over among themselves. They had been trying for a long time to get this white elephant off of their hands, and this was the first offer that they had received, and they were afraid it would be the last. They learned that the stranger was Captain Walker, of Ventura County, where he had made a great deal of money out of apricots, and that he had several large tracts of land in the richest parts of most of the other counties in Southern California. He came into their office quite often and had a word to say on any topic that might be mentioned.

When the members of the company had about decided to accept Walker's offer, he began to dictate the terms and they began to squirm. But he went easily and confi-

dently to work and converted them to his way of thinking. They were to get little down, and were to give a bond for a deed, and give a deed to any part when certain amounts were paid. The most disagreeable term of all was in regard to the water.

At the time the men that formed the company decided to develop water for their land they decided to sell the water with the land. This they thought would make the land sell, as the buyers would have no fear of an excessive water tax. When the water was developed they so advertised it and talked it to prospective buyers; and the few pieces they sold were with the understanding that they (the buyers) were to have shares in the Water Company. But there had been no Water Company formed at the time the land which produced the water was bought, and it had been bought in their individual names and had not been transfered to the Water Company; consequently the shares had no value, although the men who had bought the land on the tract were firm in the belief that they represented a part of the water.

These buyers were farmers, who trembled

before any business transaction connected with the law; although they knew enough to see that they got good titles to their land, they had not lived in California long enough to learn how the water was measured, much less learn how much was necessary for a certain amount of land, or what forms were necessary to have a good title to the water. The adjoining dry land could have been bought for half, or even less than half, they paid for land supposed to have water; but they could not have been induced to buy the dry land at any price.

By Walker's terms the members of the company transferred the water-producing land with the other, just as it stood in their names. They had been honest in their intentions, but they walked into his trap before they knew it. His intentions soon became evident. As he now owned most of the land and water shares he selected and controlled the directors of the Water Company and induced them to mortgage the stock for money, which he pocketed as purchase money for the water-producing land.

Immediately after Walker got possession of the tract the changes came rapidly. A

store and postoffice were soon in the old empty store building, a blacksmith and wagonmaker's shop near by, and new houses sprung up here and there over the tract, neat one and two-story frame cottages. He found his customers on the trains coming in from the East, as he had found Doctor Woodmanse; he had no office and did not advertise.

CHAPTER XI.

When the Woodmanses had talked more of Florence's plan of buying a lot and building a house, and John had had time to get used to the idea, he entered into it with more enthusiasm than she did. They looked at the different lots that were for sale, and decided which one they wanted, and one morning when they saw Captain Walker in Manzanita John called him into his office. As it was now in the winter season, and the time of the year for the rains, although there had as yet been none, Captain Walker wore a mackintosh instead of his linen duster, and a very rusty derby hat, a little too large for him.

"How do you do, Mrs. Woodmanse?" he said to Florence, after shaking hands with John. "You are enjoying this perfect weather, I know from that rich glow of health and youth I see in your face and your bright eyes. But then when you have such a man as this to look after you," he said, laying

his hand on John's shoulder, "you couldn't be otherwise than in good health. Isn't he a splendid fellow?" he went on. "I don't see what we could do without him. They haven't a doctor in Los Angeles that is half as good; in fact, his reputation has reached the city already, and if we had our dummy line completed he would be having calls from there all the time. But we couldn't allow that; the people out here need him and we couldn't allow his time to be taken up by Los Angeles people."

This homely, unattractive man, with his weary, sad smile, could say things that would be impertinence in others, which only seemed cordiality in him; there was a vague impression given by his manners that the truth and importance of his words made it necessary for him to talk, although he was really not well enough to make the effort. Though he seemed weary, he continued talking.

"It is the interest of this little community out here that we have at heart. This will be a suburban city some day; it will equal, if it doesn't surpass, Pasadena. Ah, I see, Mrs. Woodmanse, you think that only

the silly, golden-hued dream of an old man; but you will see. At one time Pasadena was no larger than Manzanita is now."

"And no larger than hundreds of other little places that might be named," Florence said.

"Yes, but tney have not the situation that Manzanita has. Why, I have seen the ice an inch thick in Pasadena, while here we wouldn't have a particle of frost."

"What will you do for water when Manzanita reaches such proportions?" John asked.

"Ah, there is an unlimited amount of water in those hills back there," he answered with easy confidence.

"I thought you always told me when the farmers out here were begging for more water that we would exhaust what we have if we dug any more tunnels."

"What has come over you, Doctor? We used to always agree about the bright future of Manzanita. Mrs. Woodmanse, I hope you haven't been having a bad influence over him?"

"Oh, my influence is very small; but I hope what little I have will be for good."

"The people out here are saying some very bad things of you," John said.

From what Florence had heard of Captain Walker since she came to Manzanita, she had taken a great dislike to him. And the talk of such men as Beveredge was making John's position so disagreeable that he, too, was beginning to have suspicions of him, and they now found expression in his manner as well as his words. Walker attributed this change to Florence, and directed his words more to her than to John. Laughing almost gaily, he drew a chair up and sat down immediately in front of her, and said: "I see, Mrs. Woodmanse, that you and the Doctor have been talking to some of these old croakers and chronic grumblers. But those men would criticise heaven itself, and they will ruin themselves and everyone they are connected with if they can. They are ruining their land now. A clay soil like this should never be watered and nothing is so ruinous to any land as to be watered too much. If you will go with me to Ventura County, I will show you some of the finest orchards in the state—some of the finest orchards in the world, and the

most productive—growing on just such land as this, without a drop of water except the winter rains. What this land needs is thorough cultivation; a cultivation that these men here never dreamed of. They let their land get hard after the rains are over and then they have to pour water on it before they can work it, and then they let the weeds take it and let it get hard again. Such treatment would ruin any land, not only for the time being, but permanently."

As he came to a pause Florence said: "It is too bad they are all so obtuse."

"Ha! ha!! ha!!! I see, Mrs. Woodmanse, you are incorrigible. People are just like children; they have their whims, and they must be humored and deceived. Ask any practical mother if she could raise her children without deceiving them occasionally. These Eastern farmers think they must have water all the time, or they can make no kind of a crop. It takes years for them to get over this idea, and the only thing we can do is to have a little water to deceive them with. This is the age of deception; look at the novels that are published nowadays."

Captain Walker made a study of selecting the right topic for the right person and of being able to talk on any subject. He had guessed that Mrs. Woodmanse was fond of reading.

"If I had a library as long as from here to Los Angeles," he went on, "I could fill it with novels and then not have all that are published. Why, a man can have a good education and not read anything but novels. And what are they for, but to deceive?"

"Some of them may be deceptive," said Florence, "but I don't read them; and I don't think a man can have a very good education who only reads that kind."

"Oh, Mrs. Woodmanse! you are only joking; you know that you read them because you like to be deceived."

"No, indeed I don't. I read them because they are true."

"Ha! ha!! ha!!! now we know you are joking."

"Indeed I am not. If you read novels as you ought, you would know that fiction in the novel has been left far behind, and that only truth is allowable; they must be true to life."

"Ah, there it is, Mrs. Woodmanse; there it is. You have only proved my point. The nearer it resembles the truth the more perfect the deception."

Laughing easily, he got up and moved nervously about the office, with his right shoulder, as always, much higher than the other, and one arm doubled over his breast, with his hat hanging over his hand.

Florence was annoyed because he had interrupted the conversation before she had had an opportunity to say what was in her mind; he interrupted it, too, when he had had the last word, like a gambler who is afraid and immediately leaves the table after winning. She had it in her mind to compare a good novel to a scientific description of some interesting fact in nature (as the wonderful social instinct of bees and ants)—the method of describing the facts is an art, the characters used to convey the ideas are artificial, but the chief pleasure is derived from the knowledge that they are real facts that are described. In the novel the art is carried farther, but the chief pleasure is, that we are not deceived.

But it was evident from Captain Walker's manner that this topic was dismissed.

The business transaction was soon completed, but the Woodmanses were not deceived by Walker's attempt to make them believe that he was letting them have the lot at a great bargain. And he went away conscious that he was losing his grip on Woodmanse.

CHAPTER XII.

One Sunday afternoon John took Florence for a drive, and as they were passing through Glendale they came to a young orange grove, which he pointed out to her. He told her how long the trees had been planted and how much they had borne, dwelling upon how much the crop had increased with each year, and how much it would increase for each succeeding year.

Since the Woodmanses had commenced to build their house the report had gone around among John's acquaintances that he had married a very wealthy woman. Just how much his wife was worth depended upon how many times the report had been repeated and upon the imaginations of the people who had told it. To be considered a wealthy man was too pleasing to John's vanity for him to contradict it. But it had the effect of attracting to him all the people that had property to sell. They lay in wait for him behind every bush and painted

the attractions of their properties in brilliant hues according to their varying abilities. He usually put them off with the remark that he did not care to invest in Southern California property now, or he hadn't much confidence in the fruit business. But the unusual thriftiness of this young orange grove had taken deep root in John's fancy, and was fertilized by the glibness of the tongue of its proprietor. He said nothing to Florence about buying, but after driving slowly along by it and repeating the enticing figures he had heard so often about the great quantities of fruit it would bear in the years to come, he told her what it could be bought for, and it was not difficult for her to see that he had set his heart upon their owning it.

The place fronted on two streets, and as they came to the corner after passing along one side they turned and drove slowly along the other, which took them in front of the house. The owner saw them, and, coming out, insisted that they should drive in and look over it, even if it were Sunday. Everything about the grove was in perfect order; there was not a weed to be seen nor a stray

branch on a tree, nor a square foot of ground that was not in perfect tilth. All this was very pleasing to both Florence and John, but the glibness of the man's tongue produced a very different effect upon each. John's sanguine emotions it quickly kindled into flame, to which the prudent word of flattery that was slipped in occasionally was added fuel; but in Florence's over-prudent mind it only excited suspicion. Perhaps both men felt something of Florence's skepticism in her silence, and John joined in repeating the speculative figures that are a part of the California atmosphere. When the Woodmanses left the grove they drove aimlessly along the streets, among the orchards of every kind, and John pointed out how far many of the orchards fell short of the one they had just been examining.

"The difference between the West and the East is, back there they put up with six or seven per cent. upon their money; but out here a man is not satisfied if he is not making a hundred or two hundred per cent."

"But there is much greater risk than

there is in the lower per cent. investments."

"Of course, it seems so to you. You are so used to having your money come in regularly that it seems as sure as the rising of the sun; but this seems just as sure to these men after they have succeeded a few times and know what they are about."

"Perhaps it does," Florence reluctantly admitted, "but we haven't succeeded a few times."

"Well, you must remember that I have been here for more than a year and I have been around so much, and have kept my eyes open so that I know more about the country than many men who have been here five times as long."

As this did not remove the deep-seated suspicion in Florence's mind of the effect this man's confident talk had had upon John, and she could not tell him what she feared, she kept silence, and he went on:

"There are plenty of people here who have been too prudent to invest their money and have sat by and seen such men as this make hundreds of thousands of dollars in a few years, and still they are not convinced."

Florence could not answer such argu-

ments as these, but she could not alter the fact that her feelings were on the side of prudence. She had a foreboding of the pain that might arise if she persisted in her point of view. It was already evident that John was chafing from impatience and her woman's weakness was uneasy in the presence of his manly strength.

"I suppose my ignorance is the cause of my caution, but I am afraid I can't overcome it," she said.

In an orchard they were passing a man was busily engaged planting trees. John was too much engaged in his own thoughts to see anything unusual in this; and when Florence leaned eagerly forward and laid her hand upon his arm he said: "Oh, that's nothing. We often see men in this country working on Sunday just as they would on any other day."

"No—but stop," she said earnestly, unable to form the thought that had come to her into words. As John stopped the horse she said: "Don't you see he is planting the small trees right between the rows of big ones?"

John saw this, but nothing more. Flor-

ence saw that it was unusual, but it seemed to portend something more; just what, she could not think. The larger trees were orange trees, looking weary and tired of life; the trees the man was planting were deciduous trees of some kind—apparently peach.

"Ask him what he is doing it for," said Florence; but John was still unable to get any hint of what she had in mind. The man recognized John and, seeing that they were talking, came forward and began to apologize for working on Sunday. He did not believe in working on Sunday, but in this case it seemed almost a necessity. He wanted to get the trees in the ground, as there seemed a good prospect for rain in a few days and it would settle the earth about their roots.

"But what are you planting the trees for?" Florence asked. "You have an orchard of old trees; isn't that enough?"

"Yes, I have a very good orchard of orange trees," he said; but it seemed to Florence that the tone of his voice was very despondent when his words were considered. "But orange trees take so much wa-

ter," he went on. "When they were small it was easy enough to give them what they needed, but as they get larger they require more and more, and this soil is so sandy it absorbs the water so fast that it seems impossible to give them enough. And then we are too near the coast to raise oranges —back a hundred miles from the coast is the orange country—we can't compete with them."

"Won't your peach trees need water, too?" Florence asked.

"Oh, no; peaches will do well without water. I think I will leave the orange trees and make what I can out of them until the peaches get started and then I will grub them up."

The chagrin John felt as they drove away would be difficult to describe. He could not bear to think of anything so common as peaches, which could be grown on the cheap lands of the Eastern and Southern States, competing with oranges on this high-priced land. And his hearing it just at this time, and exposing his ignorance to Florence, when he had been so recently boasting of his knowledge, caused a feeling of pugnac-

ity, almost of hatred, toward her. But it hurt him worse, although he did not realize it, to have his ignorance exposed to himself. He had taken all that the last man said as the literal truth, just as he had what the first one said; while Florence's native caution was suggesting doubts.

"I doubt if he knows that his peaches are going to make any more than his oranges," she said thoughtfully. She was studying the question for the mere pleasure of learning the truth.

Her words brought an unexpected relief to John. "The chances are that he is a changeable old creature, and doesn't know his own mind," he said. "Probably the next time we pass here he will be digging up the peach trees."

They both felt that the question of investing Florence's money was settled for the present. To her the future still looked foreboding. She could not hope for a providential interference like this every time they could not agree.

CHAPTER XIII.

The winter was almost past, and the Woodmanses had been living in their new house for several months, when James Gifford made his first appearance in Manzanita. There was a slight flush on Florence's face as she greeted him in her usually frank manner.

His bashful awkwardness was conspicuous as he began to tell her of the different places he had visited, and that he had not yet found any place where he thought he would like to live. "Property is all too high-priced," he said. "It seems to me that it is terribly high. And the stories they tell about the amount of produce they get, seem the product of a wild imagination. Sometimes I think that all the people in the state are as big liars as Snowdon."

"Wasn't it absurd the way he talked?" Florence said.

"Well, I don't know. Sometimes I feel inclined to believe all he told us. If I am

to believe anything they tell out here, I had just as well believe what he told."

"Perhaps they are not all quite so bad as he," Florence said, and then, "Have you seen the Snowdons since you came to Los Angeles?" she asked, although she was confident that his answer would be in the negative.

"No, I haven't. Have you?" he said, and laughed with surprise that she asked the question.

"Yes. We have taken dinner there twice, and they were out here one day."

When she saw how quickly the smile left his face when she said this she laughed. "You don't seem to like the Snowdons."

"I wouldn't be surprised if a blind man could see that. I am not an expert at hiding my feelings."

"I don't like them either; but we could not decline their invitation very well. They invited us there to meet an old friend of my uncle's. He was also a friend of my father's long years ago."

"I suppose," Gifford said, "that he must be very wealthy, or very influential, and

Mrs. Snowdon is desirous to cultivate his acquaintance as well as yours."

"He is wealthy, and perhaps that did have some influence; but I didn't know that your dislike included Mrs. Snowdon."

"Oh, she is worse than he is. I dislike a liar—it seems to be in my bones; but I don't know what it is about her that I dislike most. Perhaps it is that laugh of hers, which she practiced on all occasions."

"I see you are very decided in your taste."

"Well, don't you think that one extreme follows another—men are much fonder of some women than they are of any man, and when they do dislike a woman they dislike her more than they would a man of the same disposition?"

When speaking of the country again, Florence advised Gifford to look at Manzanita.

"Do you advise me to buy here?" he asked.

"No, indeed. Don't try to put your responsibility upon me."

He laughed, and said: "I would like to put it on to some one. I am tired of it."

"The first or second day after I came here," Florence began, "I took a drive with Doctor Woodmanse, and while he was in some of the houses seeing his patients, I got acquainted with three of the citizens of this place and learned a good deal about the country. I guess I had better correct that and say, I heard; for I don't know what I learned, as their accounts were so different. But the most remarkable part is, that both men who praised the country have since broken up. One of them, a Mr. Browning, lost everything he had, and the other has had the mortgage on his place foreclosed, but still has some time to redeem. But the man who abused the country is still plodding away on his farm. He is a curiosity; you ought to see him."

"I have met a few such men, but one has to steer clear of the real estate offices to find them. And when we do find them, we don't know what to believe, as you say; for they tell such different tales from the boasters."

From where Florence was sitting she could see Clara Thompson coming in from the street. "I see a friend of mine coming," she said, "who has lived in California

a number of years. She may be able to give you some information about the country."

"Is she one of the kind last mentioned, or one of the liars?"

"If you could see her you wouldn't be asking that question."

This excited Gifford's curiosity so much that he twisted himself around until he could see out of the window also. "Lord!" he exclaimed. "I'm in luck. I guess I will decide right away to remain in California if it produces such pretty girls as she."

Florence started to the door to bring Clara in. "But this is Manzanita," she answered.

"Well, in Manzanita, then."

As the front door was open, and Clara had heard a strange voice, she came into the parlor with that dignified manner fright often gives to a sensitive girl.

Florence mentioned that Gifford was recently from the East and was anxious for information about California; and Clara said (unable to control the color that came and went in her face): "I knew as soon as I came into the room that he was in need of information about this climate."

"Why?" Gifford asked, smiling with surprise. "Is it written all over me that I am a tenderfoot?" Turning to Florence, and rubbing his hand over his head, he asked: "Mrs. Woodmanse, do you see any beech-nut burrs in my hair?"

"No, I fail to see the sign. I guess it is because I am a tenderfoot, too."

"Out here we don't carry an umbrella to keep off the fog," Clara said.

"Do you call these clouds a fog?" said Gifford in astonishment. "I thought sure when I started out this morning it was going to rain."

"This is what we call a high fog."

"Well, it certainly can rain hard enough out here," Gifford said. "I've had evidence of that."

"Yes, it can, but that has nothing to do with this."

Clara Thompson was of the type that is nearer perfection at eighteen than at any other time of life. She had been rather a delicate, unattractive, morbidly sensitive child. But by a slow process of development her extreme delicacy had been left behind, and her sensitiveness had become a

charm. The brightness and delicacy of the color in her cheeks and eyes gave her an ideal, youthful appearance that was attractive to everyone. It was with a pleased smile that Gifford had greeted her, and it increased in breadth and fullness every time his eyes were attracted to her. Clara instantly felt her power, and, like all young people, was tempted to test it—to strain it a little bit in this direction and in that— to say daring things that she thought were in danger of giving offense.

"Tell us how to distinguish," Florence said to her, "so every one won't be taking us for tender—what do you call them?"

"Tenderfoot," said Clara.

"Yes, but what is the plural?"

At this they all laughed.

"Go on and post us up," Gifford said, turning to Clara again.

"That is rather an imposing task. But," she hesitated, "I don't know how to begin."

"How are you going to give me any information about the country if you can't explain a little thing like that?"

"Well, you see, I have to begin so far

back. To begin, it is foggy in dry weather and cloudy in rainy weather."

"That is good," Florence said. "When it does not rain it is dry and when it rains it is wet, and one must carry an umbrella."

"Yes; I don't see any need of going farther. We understand it all now," said Gifford, realizing that his smile was becoming painfully intense.

But Clara went on: "When you become more advanced you will be able to appreciate my information. When it has been dry a long time it requires a long preparation before it can rain; and then after it has once begun you can carry your umbrella at all times—sunshine and all—for it may rain without a moment's warning. While in dry weather a fog may sneak in at any time; it may be clear for a week and then some morning the sky will be black with a great, heavy fog. The rain always comes from the south and the fog from the west."

"I'm afraid it will be some time before I will know enough to leave my tenderfoot sign at home," Gifford said.

When they were speaking again of Manzanita, Florence advised Gifford to see Co-

lumbus Beveredge and Old Man Williams; but Clara condemned them both, and told him to go to Captain Walker or her father.

"I think it will be safe to be a little shy of Captain Walker," Florence said.

"I know Mrs. Woodmanse doesn't like him, but we think he's a wonderful man."

"Oh, he's wonderful enough—there is no doubt about that; but I think he is a man to be avoided."

"Isn't he the friend of Snowdon's that he mentioned one day on the train?" Gifford asked Florence.

"If he did I have forgotten it, he said so many things; but Captain Walker is very different from Mr. Snowdon."

"I think Mrs. Woodmanse is a little severe in her judgment of Captain Walker," Clara said stoutly. "I have never met him, but I know there are more men in Manzanita than papa who think a great deal of him. Doctor Woodmanse does; I have heard him say so, and Mr. Hanna does, too."

"Yes, but they have never had the reasons for thinking otherwise that some of the other men on the tract have. I don't believe that men like Mr. Beveredge are such dolts

as Captain Walker would like to have people believe, and as Doctor Woodmanse seems to believe. A man can be uneducated and still not be a fool. And the way Captain Walker treated Mr. Williams is enough to condemn him in my eyes."

"Oh, he just had to treat Mr. Williams that way. Papa said that no man on earth could manage Mr. Williams but Captain Walker." Then she explained to Gifford: "Old Man Williams, as everybody calls him, is just a holy terror—a regular brigand."

"That is his reputation, I know," Florence said, "because so many people judge him by his appearance and talk; but he has a kind heart, although he is uncouth."

"He was just driving everybody mad about the water," Clara said.

"Yes, Captain Walker, and those Mr. Beveredge calls Captain Walker's lieutenants, or something to that effect. Mr. Thompson, Mr. Hanna, the postmaster, and Doctor Woodmanse, with probably the two blacksmiths in the background, are the leading spirits in Manzanita, and of course no one has the interest of Manzanita so much at heart as Captain Walker. But the farmers

all say that they have almost no water, while these leading spirits claim that they have; and Captain Walker refuses to spend any more money. Of course, it would cost him the most if they paid in proportion to the amount of land each has; but as he does not farm his land and can sell it just as well as it is, he has declined to develop any more water. It seems this Mr. Williams had the advantage of him in some way; he owned the water originally and some clause in the contract put Captain Walker in his power more than he wished to be; so he bought the mortgage on Mr. Williams' place and foreclosed it."

A few minutes later Doctor Woodmanse came in, and as Gifford showed much curiosity about the Williams ranch he offered to take him to see it.

When they were gone Clara said: "Isn't he handsome?"

"I don't think he is handsome," Florence answered, "but he is nice looking."

"Yes, that's it. He is not handsome, but he is so distinguished looking. When he looked at me I felt as though he could read my very thoughts."

CHAPTER XIV.

When the Manzanita people heard that Gifford had bought the Williams ranch they had some curiosity to know whether he intended to make his home in Los Angeles or in Manzanita. The mothers of marriageable daughters took as much interest as anyone in the question. It was discussed with some interest at the meetings of the Ladies' Aid Society, along with such other topics as the "church debt," and "how in the world do the so and sos support their large family?" But they never arrived at any definite conclusion until they heard he was building a house on the ranch, and then they decided that he was going to be married and live there. Some thought he might already be married and his wife was waiting for him to get a home before she came, as the Woodmanses had done.

When the Thompsons took him to board until his house could be completed, Mrs. Thompson said that she only took him to

please Mr. Thompson, who was public-spirited and so anxious to do anything to help the new people. Some of the members of the society looked at one another behind her back and smiled; it may be that some went so far as to wink. But people are always misconstruing one another's motives, especially when they have grown daughters.

It was Saturday when Gifford had his trunks sent to the Thompsons, and that afternoon, as he was walking that way from his ranch, he was overtaken by Doctor Woodmanse, and, getting into the buggy with him, they drove to the latter's office. As they drove up in front of the office, Gooddale came out of Woodmanse's house, which was at one side of the office and a few steps back from the street. Saturday was the only day of the week that he had except Sunday to do his pastoral work. Florence and Clara Thompson followed him out on the veranda. Gifford got out of the buggy and walked across the lawn to the house, and when Woodmanse had hitched his horse, he also went over.

Florence introduced Gooddale to Gifford

as the pastor of the Methodist Church in Manzanita.

"The Methodist Episcopal Church," corrected Gooddale. "How do you do, Mr. Gifford," he said, shaking hands very cordially. "I'm happy to make your acquaintance. Mr. Gifford, I believe, is a college bred man," he went on, partly to Florence and Clara, and partly to Gifford. "We college men are always glad to meet a college bred man."

Gifford left Gooddale in the midst of his speech and went up the steps and shook hands with Mrs. Woodmanse and Clara Thompson. As the veranda was a large one and well supplied with chairs, they all sat down.

"Mrs. Woodmanse," Gifford said, "how in the world do you make your roses and other flowers grow so fast?"

"I bought large ones—I couldn't bear to wait. And then I think this Chinaman we have understands taking care of them."

"The rose is my favorite flower," said Clara.

"They are all my favorites," said Florence. "The heliotrope is so sweet, and I like any flower that has a fragrance. One that

has a disagreeable odor I think is no flower at all."

"Brother Woodmanse has a perfect little home here," Gooddale said.

"From the appearance of the lawn and flowers it looks as though they had lived here a number of years instead of only three months," said Gifford.

"If you had seen Doctor Woodmanse hurrying that Chinaman around here," said Florence, "you would have thought he was going to do everything in an hour."

"And you sat on the porch and bossed us both," said Woodmanse from the easy position he had taken on the step.

"From what college did you graduate, Mr. Gifford?" asked Gooddale.

"From De Pauw University."

"A degree from De Pauw University is well worth having," said Gooddale. "Isn't it the strangest thing," he said, addressing them all, "that we should find college-trained men in this country burying themselves on ranches?"

"I don't see that a degree from a university should be any better than one from a medical college," said Woodmanse, "and we

have to bury ourselves out in the country."

"But you are practicing your profession —you are giving the world the benefit of your education. But for a college-trained man to take to the farm is something you will see no place in the world except here in America, and especially out here on the coast."

As Gooddale was near the end of the veranda where Woodmanse sat on the step, and Florence and Clara were near the other end, Gifford turned to them and began to tell of the plans he had in his mind for his place. "I am not going to arrange my grounds about the house like all this," he said, with a wave of his hand toward the lawn and flowers, "as all the Eastern people in Southern California do; but I am going to arrange it in a way that seems to me typical of Southern California. I am not going to have a bit of lawn about the house; just a gravel court with a few native shrubs that grow up there on the hills."

"Oh, Mr. Gifford!" exclaimed both ladies.

"Why not?" he said, laughing.

"It would look so desolate," said Florence.

"A green lawn is beautiful anywhere," said Clara, "but in this country, where everything is so dry and barren naturally, a little bit of lawn is like an oasis in the Sahara desert."

"Yes, I know; I like a little bit of green, too; but I think a lawn in this country is a mistake. I am building my house upon the side of the hill, so that I can look right over your heads here to Los Angeles and San Padro. Just a few steps below the house I have planted a large patch of bananas, and am going to build a summer house; and there is where I am going to plant my pineapples."

"Well, it won't be so bad with the bananas to give a little color," Florence said.

"I think it will be horrid," Clara said, but that only seemed to amuse Gifford. "The wind will beat the banana leaves into tatters and they will be awfully ugly."

"No, the wind doesn't get down into that canon. We only get a very light touch of the sea breeze up at the house; and in the canon it is like an oven. That is the reason Old Man Williams says I will succeed there with my pineapples."

Gooddale had been saying to Woodmanse: "There is a young Englishman in my class —he fills the pulpit at Gardena, and he says that we American boys don't appreciate our opportunities. He says it is almost impossible for a poor young man to get an education in England."

"It is hard enough here," Woodmanse said.'

"Yes, but any boy can get an education here if he will try. I know of a number that are working their way through college. Of course we admire that sort of thing in others, but I would hate to have to do it myself. If we had to struggle harder for an education, though, we would appreciate it more. Don't you think so, Mr. Gifford?"

Gifford was so much interested in his own conversation that Gooddale had to repeat: "Don't you think that if we American boys had to struggle for our education as they do in England, we would appreciate it more?"

"I never was east of Indiana in my life, and am scarcely in a position to compare the educational facilities of this country with those of England."

"I am told that it is very hard to get an education in England and that one never sees a college bred man batching away out in the country on a ranch and living like a dog, as they do here in California."

"Well, I expect to soon be batching away out in the country on a ranch, but I don't suppose my college education will be much of an encumbrance to me in any calling in life."

"A college training is something every man ought to have; especially if he expects to be anything more than a mud-sill in society. As I said to Bishop Buchtal once: 'Bishop, every man that expects to be a leader of men ought to have a college training.' 'Yes, Gooddale,' he said to me as he slapped me on the back, 'you are right.' "

"The Bishop was damned fortunate to have you around to advise him," Woodmanse said as he got up and went to his office.

Gooddale never seemed to remember that Woodmanse's general education had stopped with the high-school; but he never let a little thing like rubbing other people's hair the wrong way disturb him. After

he shook hands all around and left, Gifford turned to Florence and Clara to finish the subject of which they had been talking.

"I am going to get me two big Siberian wolf hounds to prowl around in the sage brush. Won't they look picturesque?"

"You are evidently determined to have everything look wild up there," Clara said. "I think those big dogs are horrid. No one will ever come near you if you have them around."

"Do you think," Florence asked, "that you can really grow pineapples up there?"

"I don't know. I am going to try. Old Man Williams says I can pay for that farm in one year with pineapples."

"Oh, I believe they will grow if you know how to take care of them," said Clara. "It never frosts up here."

"Clara is about as enthusiastic over Southern California as Mr. Williams."

"Why shouldn't I be? It is the loveliest country in the world."

"It is a beautiful country," said Gifford, "but that doesn't prove that we can make any money out of the land."

"Yes, it does," said Clara. "The most

remarkable thing about the country is the great variety of products of the soil—semi-tropical and Northern products both grow here."

"The orange as well as the cherry," said Gifford, to hear what she might say.

"No, not the cherry; nor gooseberries, nor currants, in this part of the state; but they grow fine raspberries and they are a Northern fruit—and apples. But the greatest beauty of the climate is, one doesn't have to lay up anything for winter; for there is always ripe fruit on the trees, and always green vegetables in the garden."

"In the Chinamen's wagon," Gifford amended.

"Well, in the Chinamen's wagon, then; that is just as good."

"It seemed so strange to me," Florence said, "when I first came here, to see the farmers buying vegetables instead of raising them."

"That is because the farmers all make a specialty of something," Clara explained. "Up where we used to live in Ventura county, besides the farmers who make a specialty of some kind of fruit, there are a great

many who plant nothing but beans; and I have known men to plant their whole farms in pumpkins, and they grew so thick on the vines that you could walk all over the field by stepping from one pumpkin to another."

"And without water?" Gifford asked.

With a slightly heightened color, she answered very deliberately: "Yes, without water. And a man lost his cow one day and looked for her all afternoon and finally found her in a pumpkin."

"Do pumpkin farmers grow their own milk?" Gifford asked, much amused.

"No. It was a dairyman's cow that got into a pumpkin farmer's field."

CHAPTER XV.

One warm Sunday afternoon the men were, as usual, standing about outside of the little Friend's Church in Tropico before the services began. They had on their Sunday clothes, and were conscious of it; but fortunately, as it seemed to them, they could talk of every-day affairs as they stood about in groups whittling or watching others whittle. They were not so much interested in their conversation or whittling either, but they had eyes for every buggy that drove up to the hitch-rack. The young men, especially, saw everyone that came in sight, whether in a buggy or afoot.

When Mrs. Slooper, their minister, drove up, two or three men were ready to hitch her horse or to assist her in any way that they could. There was more than one man in that cluster whom she had helped out of the gutter, and they all loved her; perhaps some of them admired her more than they would have cared to admit.

She shook hands with everyone, young and old, and her white teeth shone on the slightest provocation. She was a handsome woman, in perfect health, as was shown by her strong, perfect figure and the color on her face—a uniform glow that added to the beauty of the expression of her intelligent blue eyes and sensitive mouth. She was dressed in the richest of black silk, and her gown fitted her perfectly.

After greeting everyone outside, she went in, where the women were having a social time, since Sunday School had been dismissed. Soon afterward the men came in and took seats on one side of the room and the women took seats on the other. The children and young people Mrs. Slooper made, as far as possible, sit to the right and left of the pulpit, so she could have them "under her eye," as she said. After Sunday School, many of them had gone to a neighboring house to get a drink and caused no little disturbance as they came in, one or perhaps two at a time, and marched in their big, heavy shoes down to the front.

Doctor and Mrs. Woodmanse came in

before the services began, and sat down together in the back of the room. Almost everyone turned around to look at them; some were contented with a glance, while others took a good, long, satisfying stare. Florence became used to this after she had been to church a few times in Manzanita. Several were heard to whisper: "That is the doctor over at Manzanita." This was what Woodmanse wished, as Manzanita was a very small place for a man of his caliber and range of fire.

After the preliminary services, Mrs. Slooper sang a solo, without the accompaniment of the little organ, in a loud, clear, soprano voice. While singing, she remained seated behind the pulpit; then she got up to the Bible and read a few passages, but she laughingly told her congregation that they need not be surprised if she did not get to her text. Again, when she had almost finished her sermon, she laughed when she reminded them of what she had told them at the beginning. She found many things to smile at as she talked, and it always brought a responsive smile from her congregation. Her face was won-

derfully sensitive and magnetic, and it was doubtless this as much as the good advice about everyday affairs which she gave them that kept them awake and interested. If she seemed to preach more to the men than to the women, it is possible she thought they needed it more; and the women had no reason to complain, for she had done them great good by reforming some of their husbands and brothers.

Often, when she could not think of anything else to say, she would fill in with one of the many trite phrases that she had at command, such as "Bless His holy name." She would sometimes, in the midst of a very interesting subject, become conscious of how beautiful she looked, and bite her under lip like a pretty, spoiled child; and then continue—if not from the same place from some other. Her talk was thoroughly practical, and doubtless what many in her congregation needed, but it would have been difficult to trace its connection with the Bible.

If anyone doubted that she was a power for good, he only needed to see her a few minutes in the testimony service to be con-

vinced that she was. She managed these rustic people with perfect ease; she cut short the long speechifiers and encouraged the timid ones in such a way that none were allowed to monopolize all the time and none neglected.

When the congregation was dismissed, she was out of the pulpit and at the door before the people had time to turn in their seats. When the Woodmanses turned toward the door, she met them smilingly, and after shaking hands with Florence she let one hand lie in John's and rested the other on his arm while she asked them their name, although she knew it very well; she thought this made them feel smaller, consequently exaggerated her own importance. She invited them to come again and worship with them.

CHAPTER XVI.

One afternoon Gifford returned to Manzanita from his ranch earlier than usual, and was loafing about Woodmanse's office. When Clara Thompson came by on her way home he walked with her. The main street of Manzanita runs east and west. The store, Hanna's cottage and the Woodmanse's office and cottage are on the south side—the last mentioned farthest east. Thompson's house is a little west of the store and on the north side of the street. When they got to the Thompsons and Clara had led Gifford into the parlor, she excused herself to go into the kitchen to help get supper; but soon returned and said that they would not let her help.

"They are very kind to me," Gifford said.

"If they thought they were doing you a kindness they didn't mention it to me," Clara answered with a pleased smile.

"Perhaps not—even I don't dare to say all I think."

"You don't dare say what you think is probably nearer the truth, so you say just the opposite," Clara said, then hastened to add: "Don't you think Mrs. Woodmanse a perfect woman?"

"Yes. I think she ought to be treated for it."

"Oh, Mr. Gifford! you certainly wouldn't have her different from what she is?"

"Well—as far as I am concerned, she does very well. But I think if she were a little less perfect she might be happier. Perfect people are out of place in an imperfect world."

"I don't see what you mean."

"She is not practical."

"That is a very common fault — I wouldn't have to look very far to find someone who is not practical."

"You mean me," Gifford said, more in answer to her look than her words, "but I am very different from Mrs. Woodmanse."

"I think you are very much alike."

"Oh! I regard that as a great compliment from you—she is such a perfect woman."

"I didn't say that—I mean—I said it be-

fore you said that she was impractical, so it has no application."

"Is that all I am to get out of it? It is hard luck to be lifted up like that, then let down so suddenly."

"It is too bad. It is my natural inclination to give anyone a little compliment when I see them fishing for it; but with you I must tell nothing but the truth."

"It seems as though the less I say the better off I am. To be cut off in that way and then told that I fished for a compliment is too much."

"Don't accuse me of what I didn't say. I never said that you fished for a compliment."

Very candid words are sometimes pleasanter from pretty lips than compliments from homely ones. Although Clara's mouth was not a perfect cupid's bow, it was none the less effective. There was a pathetic expression about it as if caused by an effort to hide pain or from much weeping in early childhood. This expression was carried out by her dark lashes and the extreme brightness of her blue eyes. While there was not enough of it to cause Gifford to think of

tears, it went right to that place in his heart where tears always go in a strong man. He thought she was a pretty girl, and that almost anything would sound well from her lips.

"I suppose you think more of the country now," Clara said, "since you have had more time to appreciate its beauty?"

"My admiration doesn't always seem to advance."

"Oh, you say that, just to be contrary."

"I can back up what I say with good evidence. Look at all of these wild flowers scattered around over the hills—a hundred acres of yellow poppies and just as great areas of other shades of yellow—and blues, and—they're shocking."

"You must be talking in your sleep," Clara said with such a saucy expression that Gifford smiled with growing admiration.

"No, really," he said. "I never was more in earnest in my life. In all of the varieties of colors here there is not a modest shade among them. They are gorgeously, flamingly, hideously brilliant; such brilliant blues and yellows were never before con-

ceived. Now for real beauty, give me the little Spring Beauty, with its modest little white face so faintly flushed with pink."

"Why should you wish any color at all —a clod of earth should be your ideal of beauty."

"Perhaps I may get used to the extremes of California—the highest mountains and most fertile valleys, the warmest winters and coolest summers, and most beautiful women. I suppose one can get used to anything."

"I am glad that you are getting to believe some of the things that are said about the state, whether you ever like them or not, I don't care."

"I'm glad liking them is not compulsory."

"It is compulsory if you live here long enough; but you will hold out as long as you can."

"I hope I won't have to like your cow and pumpkin story."

"I suppose you think all I have said about California untrue," Clara said, apparently not much offended. "I know you think it all untrue about the fine orchards

they have where we used to live, and 'without water,' as you always say." She put such comical stress on these two words that Gifford had to laugh.

"No, I don't think that is untrue. I have seen some of the damp lands in California."

"But these are not damp lands."

"There certainly must be some moisture in the soil."

"Oh, yes, in some form; but there is none that will fill a well."

"Is it possible! What do the people do for domestic purposes?"

"They haul it in wagons. Or perhaps I had just as well tell you that they do without it." Gifford laughed and blushed at her inclination to test his incredulity. "There are hundreds of acres," she went on, "of beans raised every year on that land, and they are not planted for a month or two after the last rain and are grown entirely without water."

"Well, I haven't got to the most wonderful country yet!"

"Papa says this is the same kind of land."

"Does he? Have the farmers here never tried to farm without water?"

"I don't know. Papa says that they don't know how to farm in any way."

"If I may dare be so incredulous I would say that it seems to me among so many there must be some that know how to farm properly; and since they have so little water, it seems but natural that they would have tried before this to farm without it."

"You are only guessing. Why do you find it so difficult to believe the other? The climate is the same here as it is in Ventura, and the soil looks the same."

"Because California is such a deceitful country; it has so many different climates and so many different soils that it is impossible to know where one stops and the other begins. And experimenting is the only true way to get knowledge."

"Of course you think California deceitful; the people, as well as the climate and soil."

"You don't think me capable of being so unjust?"

"Yes. I think you are capable of anything."

"Now you are going to hurt my feelings," he said, grinning.

"I would like to say something to hurt you badly."

"You are like the little boy who said that he slapped his sister because she was so darned good he had to."

"I'm not so much like the little boy as you think that you are like the little girl."

"Oh!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Gooddale regarded the Woodmanses as a part of his flock, although Florence had not been in his church a half dozen times and John had almost ceased to go. But Gooddale still continued to make John's office his chief loafing place when in Manzanita, and he asked them to entertain Mrs. Slooper, the evangelist, whom he had asked to assist him with a series of meetings at his church.

Mrs. Slooper had filled the pulpit at the Friends' church in Tropico for so many years that she had long been afraid her congregation desired a change of pastor. After a great deal of procrastination and talk of resigning and efforts to be called to another church, she resigned and went into the evangelical work.

Mrs. Slooper was too full of animation to allow anyone to be dull in her company. She made herself very much at home with the Woodmanses, and whenever she and

Florence, when going to or coming from church, saw Woodmanse in his office they would stop and have a gay, social time.

One afternoon as they returned from services, John and Gifford were in the office and Mrs. Slooper went smilingly in, and Florence followed. After much light talk, Mrs. Slooper said: "I don't think you gentlemen are doing what you might to assist us at our meetings. You might at least lend us the assistance of your countenance inside the church occasionally."

Although Gifford insisted that he did not believe in "that sort of thing," he was given no ground until he consented to take supper with the Woodmanses and then go to the evening services. Mrs. Slooper had no lack of confidence in her ability, and she thought it would be a great achievement to bring this "smart" young man onto his knees before his God. She had known many who were just as rebellious before treatment, and who were the most humble and contrite of all after being convicted of sin. After supper, Woodmanse escaped by pleading a professional engagement, and Gifford went to church with Mrs. Slooper and Mrs.

Woodmanse. At the church door they met Gooddale and Clara Thompson, and all went in together. Mrs. Slooper and Mr. Gooddale went to the pulpit and Gifford sat down with Florence and Clara.

Mrs. Slooper did most of the preaching or exhorting. The difference, as she explained it, was, that in preaching she took a text and followed it, while in exhorting she talked about what she pleased. She changed her point of view in her talk as often as she moved from one side of the pulpit to the other. Although her talk was a little bit about everything, it was a great deal about herself. But always there was an effort to please, to animate, and even excite; she did a great deal of smiling, laughing, and almost crying.

When she had finished, Gooddale took a turn, and there was the same effort to excite noticeable in all that he said. "'Unless ye be born again ye cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. Cast off the old man'—I don't mean you, old man," he said, smiling at an old gentleman on the front seat, "but the old man of sin."

As he paced up and down in front of the

pulpit with so much effort to excite his hearers, Gifford was reminded of an auction sale of horses that he had once attended. He was not surprised that these people were more or less influenced by all this effort, any more than he was surprised that people became excited at an auction sale and bid more than they intended. He felt a desire to know how his companions were affected. So far as he could discover, Mrs. Woodmanse was as indifferent as he; but he could see that Clara was very much agitated, but she showed no inclination to go forward with the convicted sinners.

If Gifford had not been so familiar with scenes of this kind, he might have been surprised at the number that were just on the outskirts of this religion. Mr. Hanna is one of a large class of men who can be found about all churches. He never missed a service, but he never did what the ministers required, nor did he deny its truth. And the church was half full of young people who seemed to come only to make sport. They whispered and winked across the room at one another, and jerked their thumbs toward the pulpit, forming the

words with their lips: "Go on, go on," and laughed when a call was made for repentant sinners to come forward. These young people attended every evening service. Was it because they had no place else to go, and must be amused? And would they when they became old and began to fear death be on the front seats with long, solemn faces as their parents were now?

"Come up and kneel at the altar," Gooddale went on, "all of you that feel yourselves sinners, and make your peace with God. Do not say, 'Well, by and by,' but do it now. Now is the time and not to-morrow. To-morrow it may be too late. I remember once of speaking just so to a man that had almost decided to kneel at the altar and ask forgiveness for his sins. He was one of the wealthiest and most influential citizens of Los Angeles. Honest and upright in all things, but he was not a Christian. He had put off from day to day the welfare of his soul and given all of his time to the paltry things of earth. But at the time of which I speak he was almost persuaded to go to Jesus and ask Him to cleanse him from all of his sins. Almost

persuaded; but, 'No,' he said, 'I will wait until to-morrow;' and in the morning I heard that he was dead. How many of you, my dear friends, are almost persuaded? At how many of your hearts is Jesus knocking and you are saying, 'Go away, Jesus, I haven't time to attend to your call now? At some other time I will listen to you—to-morrow will do?' But to-morrow, my dear friends, it may be too late. You don't know at what hour you may die. If you should die to-night, where will your souls be to-morrow? Ah, my dear friends, you can't afford to take that risk. Come now. Get right up out of your seats and walk up here and kneel at this altar, and Jesus will do the rest. Jesus died for the remission of sins. It is by His blood that we are saved. It is God's promise here in this book. There is no other means except by His blood. On this foundation we all stand. If I should die to-morrow and go to Heaven and God should say to me, 'No, Gooddale, you can't come in,' I would take the blood of Jesus in my hands and hold it up to Him and say, 'God, here is the blood of Jesus, you have got to let me in.'"

After Gooddale and Mrs. Slooper had spent much effort to get a few people to come forward, they had almost as much trouble to get them away again. They seemed to expect something radical; something wonderful in the change of heart. Gooddale told them that it was nothing but confessing their sins to God; a placing of their burden on Him, and then their part was done. But still some were not satisfied and went away from the altar feeling worse than when they came.

After the services were over, Gifford made another irreverent comparison in his mind. On coming out of the theater, a novice finds it quite difficult to come back to real life, while the habitual theater-goer and the actors come back to the real world as soon as they are away from the footlights; and often with a great sense of relief. Gifford thought he saw something of the same effect here when they had started on their way home. The fact that a clergyman believes with all sincerity in his discourse, he thought, did not affect the parallel; for that straining up to an unnatural earnestness to make others feel the import-

ance of the truth was an effort which could not but bring a sense of relief when it was over. He thought that Clara seemed shocked at Gooddale's and Mrs. Slooper's levity as they walked home. She was so full of an exalted feeling that their frivolous remarks about some of the people that had manifested such an exaggerated conviction of their sins caused her to shiver.

Gifford felt his old antagonism to the Christian religion rising, and all of his old arguments coming back to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When they came to Woodmanse's office and found him in, they all went in and sat down. Mrs. Slooper and Mr. Gooddale took the two chairs; Clara, Florence and John sat on the sofa, and Gifford on a small box he found in the back office. Gooddale told Woodmanse that he ought to be ashamed not to attend services any oftener than he did, and Woodmanse laughed. "You will regret it if you don't," Gooddale said. Clara and Florence were chatting to each other, but when they heard Mrs. Slooper and Gifford talking they stopped and listened.

"Now, Mr. Gifford, aren't you glad I made you go out to hear the true word?" Mrs. Slooper was saying.

"It was all very entertaining," Gifford answered, "but I can't think that what I heard is the true word."

"You don't mean that you don't believe the Bible?" Gooddale exclaimed.

"I believe the Bible when a proper allow-

ance is made for the ignorance and superstition of the people at the time it was written."

"My dear young man, we have to take these things from the evidence of others," said Gooddale. "A man can't learn everything from his own personal experience."

"Oh, certainly. I believe many things upon the evidence of others, but we must make distinctions. It is the kind of evidence which I object to in this case. A man can be expected to be more or less saturated with the superstitions of the times in which he lives. And under any circumstances we have to make allowances for the character of the individual."

"But you must admit, Mr. Gifford," said Mrs. Slooper, "that all of our morality comes from the Bible."

"All of our moral doctrines are founded upon the teachings of Christ," Gooddale put in.

"I will admit," Gifford said very deliberately, "that the Bible represents one stage in the development of our moral code, but I can't admit that Jesus ever had much influence upon that development."

"All of our laws and all of our morality has come from the teachings of Jesus," Gooddale said with some heat.

"I don't doubt that you think that, but if I were going to express it as I think it, I would say that they had come in spite of Jesus. The Christian church teaches better than Christ taught, and the Christian world practices better than the Christian church teaches."

Gooddale was astonished at Gifford's serene profanity, and replied vehemently: "The church teaches what Christ taught. It is founded on His teachings."

"Certainly; I know that you think that, and I knew that we could not agree when we began; but you can't expect me not to state what I think the truth when the rest of you are giving your version."

"Oh, no. We know you too well to expect you to keep still," Mrs. Slooper laughed. "We have all gone through that stage of development, and we know what you can say can't hurt the Christian religion. Go on and give us your views and I will agree to make Mr. Gooddale keep still."

"I always like to speak a word for the

truth when I know it will do any good," Gifford said, smiling at Mrs. Slooper's patronising manner. "And even when I know that it is futile and that I am wasting my breath I sometimes like to do it. But our habits of thought are so different. You like an abundance of latitude in your interpretation of the meaning of words, where I would prefer to be very close. If the literal meaning of the words of Jesus is clear, I like to stick close to that literal meaning while you like to circumvent it. But it is where you go a long way around to put a different meaning into his words that I say your teachings are better than His. Even if He meant what you think He does, He would have done much better by using the words you use than He did by using, in some cases, words that mean exactly the opposite. But the fact that you are able to put a good meaning into words of His that are immoral by their literal interpretation, is proof enough that you are independent of His teachings—that you are above Him in morality."

This excited Gooddale so much with a mixture of anger and a desire to say some-

thing to confuse or confound Gifford that it only served to dam up his thoughts, and all he could say was: "Where do you find any such teachings as those?"

"They are conspicuous enough. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' And this assertion is backed up by Christ's teachings to the rich young man. The commandments that he quoted to this rich young man you teach to every one because they are good; but the commandment he gave as His own you refuse to teach (unless perhaps it is to a few who choose to follow it), because it is bad. And yet there is not a Christian in all the world but who desires all that this young man desired: 'What must I do to inherit the kingdom of God?' and why should he go away sorrowing and they not, for Christ's words are as clear as a crystal: 'Go, sell all thou hast and give unto the poor.' That is why I think the Christian church has advanced morally in spite of the teachings of Jesus."

"You talk real well for a boy," said Mrs. Slooper. "Go on."

Without regarding Mrs. Slooper's gibe, Gifford went on with much earnestness. "The reason I think the Christian world has practiced better than the Christian church has taught, is because they practice the ancient commandment that Jesus condemns: 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth;' while the church still teaches the commandment to resist not evil. In the days before written law, this commandment that Jesus condemns: 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' was the unwritten law from which our criminal law has come, and all down through the ages it has grown, aiding civilization in spite of the meek and lowly Jesus, while the Christian teachers were trying to find some superficial matter to which they could apply Jesus' commandment."

"That is all talk," said Gooddale. "Meaningless talk."

"You certainly can't deny the importance of the criminal law. Of how much good it is to civilization we could only guess by opening our prison doors and turning all of that horde of wild beasts loose upon us,

to say nothing of those who have been put to death."

"You have failed entirely," said Mrs. Slooper, laying aside her jovial manner, "to grasp the meaning of the teachings of Jesus. His intention was to stop all criminal tendencies at their fountain head, while the criminal law merely tries to punish evil after it has been accomplished."

"If that is what you believe," Gifford said smiling, "you should cease to be a pretended Christian merely and become a real one, and live according to the commandments that are the most characteristic of Jesus." Reaching for her Bible he opened it at the sixth chapter of Matthew and read: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." * * * "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." * * * "Behold, the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are

ye not much better than they?" * * * "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin;" * * * "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Take, therefore, no thought of the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." As Gifford closed the Bible and handed it back to Mrs. Slooper, he said: "The only people I have seen who seem inclined to follow these teachings are tramps and other vagabonds. The commandment to forgive men's trespasses is just about as inefficient as the one to take no thought of to-morrow. I do not believe in preaching what I do not believe in practicing."

Gifford's talk was pleasing to Florence, for she had long ceased to look upon the Bible as having any greater authority than

other books. But to Clara, who was a true Christian and who had so recently been raised to such an exalted state of feeling only to be shocked by the levity of those who had caused it, it was an added shock. She had never been quite able to follow all the teachings of her church, but this was going too far. From the intimacy that had grown up between Gifford and Woodmanse the latter had come to look at these things very much as Gifford did, and it was pleasing to hear him speak out so boldly. Woodmanse had thought it right when beginning his practice to connect himself with the church people; but in that association with the church he had had to listen to many sermons which seemed to require more of him than they had any right to ask. To him it was a relief to find someone whom he could respect who was independent of the church.

"Well, Mr. Gifford," Mrs. Slooper said with an easy, smiling confidence, "I must confess that you talk real well for a boy; but when you grow older and have seen more of the world (I've seen a bit of the world in my day), you will learn that man

must have a religion, and that he must worship; there is something in his nature that requires it, and is made better by it; and that he must have a personal God whom he can trust as a divine guide and an infallible leader."

"That man must have a religion, I admit. But that doesn't alter the fact that the Christians only make a pretense of following their divine guide. The criminal judge sends the prisoner at the dock to the gallows on Saturday, and on Sunday goes to church and listens to a sermon on, 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.' And so it has been for nineteen hundred years. The action on Saturday was right and noble; the pretense on Sunday despicable."

"The doctrines of Jesus are so pure and noble that a mind so corrupt as yours can form no conception of them," Gooddale said with such evident venom that Mrs. Slooper and Gifford both laughed and the other three smiled.

"You must admit, Mr. Gifford," Mrs. Slooper said, "that man has a craving for

these pure and exalted doctrines. They may be unattainable, but man could not live without them."

"Oh, I admit the desire that man seems to have for infallible precepts. Another manifestation of it is found in 'All men are equal,' that men have professed to believe for a few hundred years and have made so little effort to practice; and which has no more application to the relation of man to man than has the formula that the square of the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle is equal to the square of the other two sides. But if we reason that the desire for infallibility is good because it exists, we can justify all evil on the same ground."

"Well, go on," said Mrs. Slooper when Gifford paused, "I am very anxious to know what the politics of so bright a young man are."

"Your sarcasm is very effective, Mrs. Slooper, but I think I have monopolized enough of the attention of this company."

All seemed in good humor except Gooddale, who walked to the door and waited for Clara.

They had all got up except Mrs. Slooper,

who kept her seat. "Oh, are you all going?" she said. "I would just like to stay here all night and enjoy this high intellectual atmosphere."

CHAPTER XIX.

Manzanita is a quiet little village. After supper is the time the people usually select to water and cultivate their flowers and to trundle the merry lawn-mower, so that one can see almost all of Manzanita out in the evening; those delightfully warm evenings after the sea-breeze has ceased to blow.

Gifford was away at his ranch every day and often with Doctor Woodmanse in the evenings. There was no more comfortable place to loaf and smoke a pipe than in John's office. Occasionally he saw Florence and sometimes Clara Thompson with her; and quite often Nell Hanna who had suddenly discovered a great affection for Mrs. Woodmanse.

One evening Gifford was with Doctor and Mrs. Woodmanse on their veranda. He was sitting with one elbow on his knee, his chin in his hand, and with the other hand he was drawing imaginary patterns on the floor with a stick.

"Old Man Williams has bought forty acres of Walker," he said.

"Has he?" Florence said, looking around with surprise.

After a long pause, he continued: "That old man is my ideal."

"Oh!" Florence exclaimed.

Straightening up, Gifford deliberately began: "My theory is just this: I no more believe that all men are equal than I do that all animals are equal; or that all organic beings are equal. The word equal is a term to be used in the abstract sciences and is absolutely meaningless in the concrete sciences. But I do not believe in class distinctions. There are snobs in all classes and there are true men in all classes. The difference is an individual difference; so if we wish to learn whether a man is worthy of esteem, we must first cultivate his acquaintance."

"That's very good, Professor, go on," said Woodmanse.

"He is only trying to justify his affection for Mr. Williams," Florence said.

"You're right. I think the Old Man is a true man. He is all that I am, and he is

all that I lack—he is bold and original, and he is thoroughly practical."

"How do you excuse his stealing the Manzanita water?" Woodmanse asked.

"That is a part of his practical side and that is the side on which I realize most that I fall short. He had an agreement with the Water Company, and they failed to fulfill their part of the agreement; therefore, war was declared and anything is fair in war. Now I never would have declared war. I would have gone off on to the hillside and sulked."

"That is the way I would do," Florence said. "If anyone does me an injury I go off by myself and pout."

"And perhaps no one will ever know that your feelings are hurt; but Woodmanse here strikes straight out from the shoulder."

"You bet I do."

"He is as thoroughly practical as Old Man Williams," Gifford continued to Florence. "That is the reason I admire him so much. But I am determined to improve; I am going to take the Old Man as my model. I have about twenty ideas as to the way a

thing should be done and execute none; while the Old Man will have but one and that is the one he is executing."

"He says he is going to have the finest house that was ever built," Gifford continued a little later. "It is going to have hot and cold water in every room."

"Hurrah for the Old Man!" said Woodmanse. "He can afford to build a fine house, now, you paid him so much for his land."

"I couldn't think of Jewing the Old Man down, and then, why should I? For all I know, it may be worth twice what I gave, and, then, it may not be worth anything. He says it is worth five times what I gave."

"If he is your model," Florence said, "why don't you begin to be sanguine?"

"That is so, I ought. But I'm afraid that I will never be able to walk in the Old Man's shoes. The amount of hope he carries in his bosom exceeds anything one can imagine. The king's horses couldn't pull him away from Manzanita. He thinks everybody here is sure to make a fortune, and that we can have the greatest abundance of water if we try. No, I never can hope to attain such a height as that."

"Well, Mr. Williams can't lay any claim to personal beauty or charming manners," Florence said. "I was thinking how much greater your admiration must be when they are joined to the sanguine disposition you admire so much."

Gifford readily guessed who Florence had in mind. "Well," he said slowly, with something akin to a blush showing under his brown skin, "I don't mind telling you and Woodmanse that, while I think Miss Thompson excels the Old Man in the ways you mentioned, she falls short of him in another way." John and Florence remained silent waiting for him to go on. "As much as I have seen of the Old Man, I have never known him to tell anything that was not true. Of course I say this with a great deal of reluctance, but I have no one else to confess to, and it is contrary to my nature to keep anything to myself."

"We appreciate your loneliness and that you are driven to come to us with your troubles, but do you think that this trouble is great enough to justify such a long face?" Florence said.

"I see you are inclined to laugh at me,

but that is only your frivolous nature. I think it a very serious matter to have even a lurking suspicion that such a beautiful young lady is guilty of putting ruffles on the truth."

"I believe," Florence said, "that you shy at everyone you meet, expecting to find deceit hidden somewhere."

"Well, it is a kind of monomania of mine. But it is more because I dislike deceit so much, and am inclined to magnify its importance than that I see it so often. I would never accuse Columbus Beveredge of lying, and, as I said awhile ago, I have never seen any signs of it in Old Man Williams. For you, I think it would be utterly impossible. Woodmanse, dealing with all classes, as he does, is probably tempted as much as any man on earth; but I don't believe he would be guilty of anything worse than humbugging the people a little for their own good."

"I think you are an extremest in more ways than one," John said. "I have known Clara Thompson for some time and I never thought she was deceitful, nor do I think her so good looking."

"Oh, she's a beautiful girl," Florence said.

"I think she's the prettiest girl that ever walked the face of the earth," Gifford said, and Florence and John laughed. "Well, if I say bad things, I must also say what is good."

"But that is not all the good that can be said of her," said Florence; "she thinks of cultivating her mind, and takes a pride in her intelligence."

"She is bright; but that makes it all the greater pity that she can't see how beautiful the truth is, and learn to love it."

"Well, that's your calling, Gifford," John said; "that's a worthy mission for a great advocate of the truth."

"Don't you think it would be easier for me to make a truthful, homely girl pretty?"

"Well, you might try Nell Hanna."

"Oh, she's not homely and she's not truthful."

"What!" exclaimed Florence, "have you discovered another one?"

"Have you never noticed it? But they are as different as day and night. Miss Hanna seems to be morbidly afraid that her

motives are all wrong. If you ask her why her people did this or that, she will invent a motive every time; and often she invents very ridiculous ones when their real ones were admirable. But there is no fear in Miss Thompson; I sometimes think her fibs come from a dare-devil spirit."

"I guess you don't think either one of them very bad."

"Oh, no. I might if they were men or if they were old and ugly."

CHAPTER XX.

When Gifford had gone home John asked Florence if she thought he had any serious intentions of marrying Clara.

"I don't know," she answered, "and I don't suppose anyone ever will know. It will take him all time and eternity to make up his mind. Such men are just made to break girl's hearts."

"Someone else I know took plenty of time to make up her mind," John said, and smiled at Florence, who smiled in return.

"It is not so bad in a woman as it is in a man, because she doesn't seek the man. And then, I see the error of my ways."

"You say that very feebly."

"It wouldn't do for me to say it any other way after quarreling the way we did this morning."

"We didn't quarrel this morning—at least you didn't. I admit that I was angry, but you never opened your mouth. You never do, but you go ahead and do as you please, without any regard for what I say.

"I think you might heed what I say a little bit," he added a moment later.

"I do, when I can bring myself to see as you do; but you have no right to ask me to give up my opinions altogether."

"Your opinions! I don't see how you can possibly believe the way you say you do. It is just because you are too indolent to try to improve."

"You know my opinion of quarreling," Florence said in a low tone of voice that was none the less very expressive of a good deal of feeling. Then she hurried on, anxious to change the subject: "Clara is the girl that Mr. Gifford needs. That sanguine disposition of hers would make up for his everlasting doubting."

"Do you think that she cares for him?"

"Mrs. Thompson tries to give the impression that she doesn't, but I think that is because she thinks he is only flirting with Clara. I know that is the reason she makes Clara go every place with Mr. Gooddale. They will hold on to him until they have Mr. Gifford secured."

"I always supposed they considered Gooddale the better match."

"I can't see why you thought that."

"He is the minister of their church, isn't he? While Gifford is such a wicked young man. I always thought such things went a long way with young ladies and especially with their parents."

"When you say wicked, you have reference to his religion, I suppose."

"Yes, I meant his religion; but what are you laughing at?"

"You church people are all alike. You attend church for policy, and none of you imagine that any of the rest can do anything so wicked. At any rate, I haven't a doubt that Mrs. Thompson is using her minister, God's chosen instrument to reveal to her the true word, as a cat's paw."

This made John laugh; we are always glad to hear of a fellow transgressor.

"Most mothers," Florence continued, "will scheme for their daughters, and it would take very strong language to describe the scheming Mrs. Thompson would be willing to do for Clara. Perhaps, though, she needs someone to scheme for her."

"No, I think Gifford was right, and Clara can do her own scheming," said John.

"I didn't mean that; but I was thinking that if I am not mistaken, Clara literally threw her heart at Gifford, and now if she doesn't get him, she'll be greatly disappointed."

CHAPTER XXI.

Doctor Woodmanse's practice was increasing rapidly. Not only that, but it was improving in quality, he thought, as it was spreading among a class who were able to pay for his services. This success was well deserved, for a more conscientious physician never practiced. At times he would be very busy; so busy it kept him going day and night to fill his engagements, and that was when he was happiest.

Following these extremely busy spells were duller ones, when he was restless and fidgety; but he never ceased to electioneer. If he knew that there was a crowd of loafers in the store he made a point of going in and saying a pleasant word to each. Or, if there were a prospect of a dull day before him, he would drive to Glendale, Burbank or San Fernando, and perhaps stop to purchase a cigar in passing through and renew his acquaintance with the people he saw there. He made it convenient to tell of his

practice; how busy he was and of some of the cures he had effected. He did not consider this means as small; nothing was too small or too great for him to make use of to advance that beloved profession.

At first it was only a means to an end, to make for himself a place high up in the world; but he was rapidly allowing the means to become the end. As he became more absorbed in his profession, he had less time for other things. He had the feeling (it was too vague and unconscious to be called an opinion) common to a large class of men, that while his profession required study his home life required none. This left Florence exposed to his reckless, thoughtless nature. She had long known that he was a man with a strong will; and she first learned his disposition to decide all disputed questions in his own way, when they were building and furnishing their house.

Florence's idea of what she wanted was more or less matured before she mentioned it to John; but as the work went on, changes were suggested and as Florence often saw many advantages in each of several different plans, and found it difficult to decide, it

was sometimes a pleasure to have some one to decide for her. But John's intuitions often seemed disagreeably rapid; and upon more than one occasion his tenacity to them was unjust as well as unkind. As it was Florence's disposition to suffer in silence, and John was not quick at divining the feelings of one of her disposition, he remained ignorant of what she suffered.

One morning which had the prospect of being one of his detestable dull days, he took a short drive for appearance sake before the mail came in. Coming back just as the mail was opened, he took Florence her letters and was then fidgeting about his office, while his horse pawed restlessly at the hitching post. Just as his nervous energy was becoming unbearable, a boy that he knew belonged to the family of Judge Anderson dashed up to the office on horseback and said that they wanted the Doctor to come to Anderson's immediately.

If Woodmanse had had a call like this soon after he began practicing, he would have jumped into his buggy and hurried after the boy. But he had learned enough in the short time he had been practicing to

know that most people thought if they went for a doctor they must go as fast as they could; and he also knew from the nature of the case (as he had been called there before) that it was not very urgent. Judge Anderson was a wealthy man, and consequently the kind that Woodmanse wished to please, but it was necessary to make him realize Woodmanse's importance. The best way to do this was to let him wait. Woodmanse felt this, but the difficulty was to keep his impatience in check. As it was almost time for their midday meal, he went into the house and vented his impatience upon Florence.

"Is dinner ready?" he asked, bolting into the room where Florence sat reading.

"Why—no, John," she said, interrupted in the middle of a sentence. "It must be an hour yet till dinner time."

"I have got to go to Anderson's," he said, pulling out his watch impatiently.

"Well, if you think you can't get back for dinner I can give you a cold lunch," she said, as she closed her book and got up. She was used to his irregular comings and go-

ings, but his impatience was always a source of surprise to her.

"I'm tired of always having to eat cold dinners," he said, unreasonably irritated because he did not find her in immediate sympathy with his mood.

"Well, if you can wait, it won't take me but a few minutes to get you something warm."

"Hurry up then and I will go on to Burbank while I am over that way." He had no business at Burbank, but he thought it might lead to something, and anything was better than these monotonous details of life that were always an irritating hinderance to productive work. He pulled out his watch again and looked at it without seeing or caring in the least what it had to say. He measured time by his impatience and not by his watch.

Florence went to the kitchen and started the maid to prepare the dining table, while she took the roast out of the oven, which had just been put in, and put some cold meat to warm, and commenced to prepare one of the dishes she had become so expert at making out of any cold provisions

she might have in the cupboard. John's impatience confined itself to the front part of the house for a short time, but soon worked its way back into the kitchen.

"It will be ready in a few minutes," Florence said cheerfully.

"In a few hours," he muttered and went back into the front part of the house, but not to sit down. He soon came back and, after looking a moment at what Florence was doing, he turned with an exclamation of impatience and went out of the house.

The girl came from the dining room grinning and said: "He's gone. I saw him driving off."

"Well, you can put the roast back into the oven," Florence said, without a change of countenance. She went back to her book, but not to read. She had lost all interest in it, and sat with it unopened in her lap looking out of the window. She could not understand how John could be so unreasonable. His thoughtless disregard for her duties or his ignorant supposition that they were too trivial to be worthy of consideration, was irritating to such an extent that it was unbearable.

It seems to be an essential part of the egotism of man (the exceptions are few) to dwell upon the peculiarity of his disposition and cultivate it and often gloat over and boast of it. If we could cultivate our physical peculiarities as we do our mental and moral ones, what hideous deformities we would be. The man with a musical talent cultivates that, and often that alone, until it is not only developed out of all proportion to the remainder of his talents, but they are dwarfed. This is not only true of the many other professions, but it is true of the moral nature, and often of little traits that are merely oddities, which become laughable under this culture.

Florence was placid and unpretentious, and it was this part of her disposition that had been augmented by her reading and thought. From her reading, the idea that life was very much the same in all circles of society had become firmly fixed. She was confident that life in the little village of Manzanita could be just as happy as anywhere in the world, and she was equally confident that it would be unbearable to her in any position if it must be full of conten-

tion. It was being gradually forced into her consciousness that the mild words free from the heat of passion that she was willing to use were pitiably insufficient to convince John of his thoughtless disregard of her interests and opinions. He was too impetuous to be influenced by her mild methods. It was of these things she was thinking for long hours after he had forgotten his action and words in the active pursuit of his profession. They cut her sensitive nature so deeply that it seemed to her that her suffering was out of all proportion to its cause.

CHAPTER XXII.

It took Gifford several months to make the improvements he wanted on his ranch before he moved there. Some of the ladies of the Aid Society, who took so much interest in such things, thought it took him longer because he liked boarding at the Thompson's so much. When one of them said she guessed he thought the Thompsons a mighty good place to board, another said she thought Mrs. Thompson knew what she was about when she took him to board.

But his house was finally completed, and he had been living there some time, when late one afternoon Minnie and Clara Thompson were sitting on the Thompson veranda. They had been to Los Angeles that day, and Clara had bought a ring. It was of the ring they were talking.

"I don't see why you won't," Clara said.

"Because—you can show it to him yourself if you want him to see it so bad."

"Show it to him! You must think I am a dunce."

"Well, he can see it for himself, then."

"Oh, bah! He would never see it in the world."

As Minnie tittered at this, Clara smiled and said: "He's as blind as a bat about anything of that kind."

After a minute's reflection, Minnie said: "Well, I'm not agoing to do it. I'm not going to march in to say my little speech. You never will let me come in at any other time, unless he and Mr. Gooddale are here at the same time; and if I have company I have to take them out to the dining room to entertain them, while you sit back in the parlor with your beau."

"You know you never have any company but Charley Sales, and you don't mind taking him into the dining room," Clara said in a sweet, persuasive tone of voice. "And when you get to be Miss Thompson you can have the parlor all to yourself."

"Oh, yes; you can be awfully sweet when you want a favor."

"Well, I do lots of things for you. And this is not very hard. You won't have to

go in just as though you did it on purpose," Clara said, smiling; "but you can be in there when he comes."

"I would like to know how much better that would be—how would it look for me to be just happening to be in the parlor at that time and never at any other? What would I be doing?"

"Well, I will let you go to the door."

"You *are* kind. Suppose I did go to the door and he did as he did the time you got me to, to see if he would ask for you, and he didn't?"

"I don't care if he is only flirting; I knew then, and I know now, that it is me, and not you, that he wants to flirt with."

"You wasn't any too certain of it, then."

"I'll tell you what let's do," Clara said a little later. "We'll be sitting out here when he comes and after he has been here awhile you can say: 'Why, Clara, where did you get that ring?' just as though you had never seen it."

"Yes. I know your little scheme. You will blush and simper and try to hide the ring. I would like to know what I am to get for telling your lies for you. I have

done enough of that sort of work for you already."

"When did you ever do anything of that kind for me?"

"You know well enough; when he was boarding here and you told about going buggy riding up at Ventura with Maurice Green and you saw the meteor; and I said that it was in the paper that the meteor didn't fall till nearly twelve o'clock."

"Oh, that didn't amount to anything—you did that just for fun."

"If it didn't amount to anything, why did you plan it all so carefully?"

"Oh, I just did that to tease him".

"Yes—it was precious little he cared."

"You don't know how much he cared. He is just like an Indian and wouldn't make a face if you were to kill him."

"You say that, but you know he didn't care."

"I didn't say he cared," Clara said, flushing with annoyance; "but I said he wouldn't let anyone know it if he did."

"I told him," Minnie said emphatically, "that I thought it was wicked to flirt."

"Its precious little good that will do."

"Its precious little good all of your scheming will do either," Minnie retorted.

"I don't care. I'm not doing it because I think it will do any good, but just for the fun."

An hour later, when supper was over, but it was still early in the evening, Minnie and Clara were again on the veranda with their plans all matured. Clara was to pay Minnie with one of her old rings for the part she was to perform. Both were pleasantly excited. Minnie's excitement vented itself in an occasional laugh, but the only evidence of Clara's was a brighter glow in her eyes, and on her cheeks, and a smile when Minnie laughed.

A rose vine almost covered the front of the Thompson veranda, and while Minnie and Clara were almost hid from view they could see through the openings to the store, and Hanna's house just beyond, but could not see the road by which Gifford would come to the store.

"He's coming," Minnie said.

"How do you know?" asked Clara.

"Because there goes Nell Hanna to the store."

"Oh, she just thinks it is about time for him to come."

"She'll go in at the back door, I'll bet. She thinks we won't see her if she goes in that way."

It was too early in the evening for the loafers to collect at Hanna's store when Gifford came from the north on the street that crosses the main one between Hanna's house and Woodmanse's. After hitching his horse he went into the store after his mail, as he did almost every evening. The postoffice occupied the front corner of the store nearest Thompson's; on the other side of the store the end of the counter nearest the door could be seen from where the Thompson girls were sitting. Soon after Gifford went in they saw him leaning over the counter and Nell Hanna standing behind it.

"He's giving her something," said Minnie. "No, she's giving him something."

"He showed her a letter," Clara said.

"No, it wasn't. It was something she took out of the showcase."

"It was a letter," said Clara positively. "See how she is laughing."

"I'll bet she is scared to death," said Minnie. "She gets pale and trembles all over whenever she comes near a young man."

"Why does she run after them, then? I would be ashamed to chase into the store every time I saw him coming—he never goes to the house to see her."

"He seems to like to see her in the store mighty well," Minnie said. "Perhaps he don't go to the house because it isn't necessary."

"It seems to me like her mother would want her to have more dignity."

"Her father's in the store. I don't see what harm there can be for her to go in there if she wants to ."

"I suppose she is like you, and her mother can't do anything with her."

Several men who came walking up the street went into the store, and soon afterward Gifford came out and over to the Thompsons. After he had been there long enough, and Clara had given the proper signal, Minnie made her little speech, or more properly an exclamation, although she found it very difficult to keep from laugh-

ing. But when Gifford failed to take any notice of the incident, as it seemed to her, she had to escape into the house to laugh. Clara declared afterward that she did not expect him to take any notice of it at the time; but she never let Minnie know how much disappointment she felt because he did not mention it afterward.

When Clara began to lose hopes of Gifford's asking about the ring, and he said nothing about the letter she saw him show Nell Hanna, she began to be more curious than ever. As he was slapping the bunch of papers he held in his hand on his knee, she said: "Did you get a letter from your best girl?"

"Yes," he answered promptly.

This was an old topic with them. Although he had told her often that he had no correspondents in the East but his father, she never seemed to tire of hearing it.

"Do you want to see it?" he asked, as he drew a large envelope out of his pocket and handed it to her. It was addressed in a very masculine hand, as she could see, even in that dim light.

"Is there anything funny in it?" she asked.

"Perhaps a Tammas Haggart could discover it, but I have not. It is as dry a business letter as I ever read. My father never writes any other kind."

Clara was disappointed—what was it so funny that he had shown Nell Hanna? As she still had the letter when he got up to go, he held out his hand for it and she put it behind her. She was standing quite near him, and he could have reached it if he had tried, but he turned as though he were going without it, and she gave it to him. He hesitated on the step; not because he had so much to say, but, on the contrary, he felt that he had acted the dolt all evening. He had suspected Clara's little schemes, but he felt helpless and could not respond.

Although Clara was disappointed, it seemed to drive her on. She had never really believed what her mother and Minnie asserted so often, that Gifford was flirting with her. As he backed hesitatingly down to the bottom step, she followed down two steps and sat down. He sat down, too, on

the edge of the step, as though he had stopped only provisionally.

"Did you ever see a clairvoyant," Clara asked. She seemed nervous and excited.

"No, I never have."

"I never had either until to-day. But I have always had a curiosity to know what they would say. When I was in the city to-day at my cousin's," she ran rapidly on, growing more nervous as she went, "she said one had recently moved into their neighborhood, and we went to see her just for fun. She said if I would cross her hand with fifty cents she would tell my fortune, but I wouldn't let her. But she told me the name of the only man I ever loved. How do you suppose she knew?"

"I don't know," said Gifford, feeling more like a fool than ever.

When he left, Clara went slowly up the steps and sat down on the veranda. She was ready to cry from chagrin, but her anger kept back the tears. Gifford had always been a disappointment to her; his actions had always been so unconventional and different from all that she expected. When she thought how different he was from her

idea of a lover, she believed with her mother and Minnie, that he was only flirting with her; but when his evident honesty and sincerity were uppermost in her mind she could not believe it. But their insisting upon it so much had the effect of making the time she had known him seem long and of aggravating her impatience.

CHAPTER XXIII.

To the eye of a stranger the Manzanita tract looked very flourishing. There were many new houses and new orchards, but all this had been done with capital squeezed out of the soil of the states east of the Rocky Mountains by patient labor and saved little by little. The people did not think of this, much less worry about it; their minds were too much taken up with the future to give any time to worrying about the past. The vital question was, could the soil of Manzanita provide the other necessaries of life after other parts of the country had made such liberal contributions. From the dissatisfied grumblings that were to be heard, it was evident that there were many who had doubts of it.

It takes a long time for an orchard to come into full bearing, and something is necessary to live on in the meantime, as well as the expense of properly caring for the growing trees. It was the people that had

planted only a part of their land in fruit trees and were relying on the quicker maturing crops upon the balance to meet these expenses, and the ones that had no orchards at all, but depended solely upon winter vegetables and berries, that were doing most of the complaining; for Manzanita was not old enough to be in the orchard-grubbing period. Although the trees had been planted and cared for a number of years, they were not old enough for the people to have lost all confidence in them and to grub them up to plant others, as was the case in many other localities.

However much the farmers might differ as to the quality of the soil and proper crop to plant, they were all of one mind, that they needed more water. When Old Man Williams had moved into his new house and commenced work on his new ranch, he was always agitating this question. At short intervals he went about among the farmers and told them that there was going to be a water meeting at the town hall that evening and for all to be sure to come. These water meetings were very informal; the boldest speakers said what they thought,

and the rest sanctioned it by grunts. It never discouraged the Old Man for some of the chronic grumblers to say it did no good to agitate the question, as the directors of the Water Company paid no attention to it.

One evening when Gifford went into the store there was no one in but Hanna and Charley Sales, the young blacksmith. Charley was a great favorite. His extreme good nature helped to excuse his intense selfishness with most people. Hanna was one of the few men that are at ease in any company; he knew no superior nor inferior. He was always ready to do all in his power to please his customers—high and low. The store he kept was much better than his trade warranted; but he was full of an adopted enthusiasm, and kept a store for what Manzanita was going to be, and not for what it was. When his enthusiasm seemed to fall short, and he thought that he was wasting his capital and years of experience, and Thompson was not equal to the occasion, Captain Walker would run off a few of his glib sentences and soon have Hanna in a proper frame of mind again.

When the citizens of a country become discouraged the government goes to war with another to get their minds off of themselves; so Captain Walker kept Hanna and Thompson both so engaged in cheering up the farmers that they had but little time to complain of their own affairs.

Soon after Gifford went into the store the farmers began to come in. They did not hurry, but came slouching in, one at a time, or perhaps two or three together. Thompson stood in a corner near the door. He was a very tall, large man, with large projecting forehead, deep set eyes, and a long, full beard. He kept combing his beard with his fingers and finding knots in it, at which he kept tugging. Woodmanse came in with a pleasant word for each one, and all seemed pleased by the attention he paid them; he liked to be considered one of the boys, as much as to make himself popular on account of his profession.

Columbus Beveredge came dragging his feet in. He would have been thought a tall man if Thompson had not been near. "Doc, are you the man that called this water meeting?" he said to Woodmanse. He dragged

his words out of his mouth with as much effort as he dragged his feet over the floor.

"I know nothing about any water meeting," Woodmanse answered.

"Oh, now, Doc, that won't do," said Beveredge, laughing. As Woodmanse looked at him he looked away and said: "Well, somebody said that we were going to have a water meeting."

Just then Old Man Williams' hoarse croak was heard outside of the door, saying: "If there is anything mean done in Manzanita ever'body says 'Old Man Williams did it.'" As soon as he got inside of the door he said: "Well, Doc, why haven't you got a light in the hall? Ain't we going to have a water meeting?"

"I don't know," said Woodmanse.

"Yes, we are," said Williams. "All of the boys are here now, and we want to have a water meeting. We've got to have more water, and we had just as well get at it now."

"So Old Man Williams is the man that's to blame for this water meeting," said Beveredge.

"Yes, I'm to blame. I'm to blame for

ever'thing. But we've got to have more water. Doc, send somebody over to the hall to light up and let's get to business. The boys are all here now, and they want to get this business over and go home."

"We couldn't get any more water if we tried," said Beveredge, "but we can't even try. We don't have anything to say in it."

"Yes, we do. We're the stockholders and the directors are going to do what we want, and we all want more water," said Williams.

"It's an old hard-pan soil, anyhow, and it wouldn't raise anything even if we had more water."

"There's no hard-pan about it," said Thompson's big, deep bass voice.

"No hard-pan about it," said Beveredge, with a comical drawl, and half a dozen farmers laughed their applause.

"What's that?" asked Old Man Williams, who had been buttonholing Woodmanse, and had not heard what was said.

"Thompson says there's no hard-pan about this soil," said Beveredge.

"There's lots of it," said Williams, "but it don't hurt anything."

"Oh, no, it don't hurt anything," said Beveredge, laughing sarcastically. "No, it don't hurt anything; its good for the land."

"The only trouble with this land is, you water it too much," said Thompson, and his speech was greeted with derisive laughter; but he went on without regarding it. "This soil is just like the soil in Ventura County, where the best orchards in the state are growing without a drop of water except the winter rains."

"This soil is just like a woman," said Beveredge, "if she makes up her mind she ain't going to do a thing, you'd just as well let'er alone."

At this they all laughed, and Old Man Williams louder than any. "Is that the way you treat your woman," he said. "Well, its no wonder she never does anything."

"Its no wonder his land never does anything," said Thompson. "That's the trouble with the farmers here; they don't work their land enough. They irrigate it and let it bake as hard as a brick and then say it won't grow anything. You had all better be at home now tilling your ground and not holding water meetings."

"It's too dark now, Thompson," said Williams. "We will have to plow to-morrow; but to-night we are going to have a water meeting. We've got to have both; we've got to have good work and we've got to have water. I've seen those lands where they grow things without water—there's plenty of it down by Compton and I've lived on it —I've tried it here—it won't work—we've got to have water."

"You're right there, Old Man," said Beveredge, "I've lived on damp land, too; a blind man could see that this wasn't damp land. We used to grow six crops of alfalfa down by Santa Anna and here we can't grow half a one without water. I haven't had two tons of hay off of my patch this season, when I ought to've had fifty, and I've put all of my water on it, too."

"The chances are you went to sleep and let the water run down a gopher hole," said Thompson.

"Well, it wouldn't take much of a gopher hole for the small head of water I get to run down it. I don't dare drink all I want if I'm very thirsty."

"Your hydrant must be a poor one," Will-

iams said. Then turning to Woodmanse he said: "Doc, why don't you light up the hall and let's have our meeting? You are one of the directors, ain't you, and you manage the hall? Well, let Charley Sales have the keys."

"Here, Charley," the Old Man said, as Woodmanse reluctantly gave up the keys, "you are the janitor, ain't you? You go over and light up the hall."

Charley took the keys and went out grumbling: "I may be the janitor, but I never get anything for it."

"Come on, boys," Williams said as soon as Charley was out of the door. "He'll have it lit as soon as we get there."

When all had left the store except Gifford, Williams stuck his head back in the door, and, seeing him still sitting there, called: "Come on, Jim." But Gifford did not go. He thought he had heard enough of what was likely to be said.

Soon after the men had gone to the hall Woodmanse came back into the store with Florence. As soon as Hanna saw them he cried in a laughing, teasing manner: "Here, Doc, why aren't you over seeing after that

water meeting? I thought you and Thompson were going to put a stop to these meetings?"

"Walker and Thompson can look after their own water meetings. I've got no land to sell."

"Mrs. Woodmanse, I believe you are letting Doc backslide." Hanna said as he wrapped up the goods she had asked for. "He used to be a good friend of Walker's."

"If he is backsliding I have had nothing to do with it," Florence said, wondering why any one should think that she had so much influence over John, when it seemed to her that she had none. It had always been very disagreeable to her to have it appear to others that he was a tool for Walker, and she had never hesitated to express her opinion of Walker to him; but it seemed that he turned a deaf ear to all that she said. It was certain, though, that he was changing, and she rightly guessed that it was due to the gibes of the men about the tract.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was about the middle of August, and Gifford was riding one evening toward his ranch. The horse was walking with a long, swinging stride. The reins were lying unheeded across its neck and hung in long loops at each side, which swung back and forth as it swung its nose with each step. Although that easy, swinging walk was a pleasant motion, and one that Gifford was usually very fond of, it did not on this evening please him. His thoughts would not swing along easily with the motion of the horse as was their wont, but went by disagreeable jerks that irritated him; so he got off, and, turning it loose, walked behind. He was in an unhappy mood and was not satisfied with anything, much less with himself.

A great many people draw a broad and fast line between reason and feeling; but this is a great mistake. It is true that reason, when it is most abstract, has but little of the nature of a sensation about it; but

it is not commonly so. Since our lives run along in a straight line, we must choose by means of reason the few sensations or emotions we are able to enjoy at one time, and reason is often merely a comparing of different feelings. When a man, in walking through an orchard, has picked up an apple and a pear and knows he cannot eat both, he may compare them by recalling the sensations of taste; but although he may recall his sensations enough to know that he is fonder of a pear than he is of an apple, he has doubts about this pear being ripe; then he tastes each and compares the sensations.

Reasoning is not often so direct a comparison of sensations. Often we have to compare an immediate one with one that is remote; as a boy eating a green apple thinks that the delicious puckery taste more than balances the cramps he knows are sure to follow. Often we have to compare an emotion that is strong and fleeting with one that is mild and enduring. The people that are able to make a just comparison—those who can give remote sensations and emotions sufficient importance, are the ones that are called reasonable. The one great dif-

ficulty these people have to contend with, in questions of great importance where considerable time is taken in deciding, is their varying moods. When a man has the blues, all of the conclusions he had arrived at in a different state of mind appear false.

Gifford's mood was one in which he could not decide anything and yet his mind could not be at rest; all of his worries seemed to torment him. Although he tried to convince himself that he need not lose sleep about paying too much attention to Clara as long as Gooddale was her escort to all the church services about Manzanita, yet he did worry. He was very fond of being in Clara's company, but he did not want his pleasure of the moment to raise expectations that would some day make her unhappy. But just how much he might be allowed the pleasure of seeing her, and not indulge too much, he had never been able to decide. He did not know enough about social customs to have any idea what others might think. But he knew that it is the especial decision of each case and not the general decision of society that is of importance—the wrong of doing something to give another pain. This is the

real question, and it is impossible to answer it; for where is one to get the knowledge by which to decide it? What is the harm in paying as much attention as one likes to another who is not likely to be seriously affected? And how is one to know what the state of the other's affections is?

Perhaps what worried him as much as anything was the dim consciousness that from the first Clara had expected more than he could make up his mind to give. Of course this had a great deal of egotism in it, and he would reject it at times, but could never get entirely rid of it. If it were true, how was he to get well enough acquainted with her to decide for himself, without giving her a false impression? Should one have no regard for hints of his conscience that may seem egotistical, or must he go to the other extreme and allow his self-esteem to make a mountain out of a mole hill? Between these two extremes Gifford had been vibrating ever since he first met Clara. At times he would stay away from her for weeks, and at other times he would give way to that great attraction she had for him and go to see her almost every day.

The most important question Gifford had to decide was the question of his own mind —did he love Clara enough to look over her faults to the extent of wishing to marry her? He did not doubt that he loved her, but did he respect her enough? He loved her because she was bright and beautiful, but could he ever respect her as much as he would like to respect the woman he thought of as his wife? He knew that she often exaggerated because she thought he was such a stickler for the truth; but he thought behind it all, down deep in her heart, she was deceitful.

Everyone has faults; he knew this. He knew that he had faults, and that if he ever married he would have to marry a woman who had them also. But the question was, how much would he have to bear? This inability to make up his mind had tormented him when deciding all of the important questions of his life. At times he believed it would drive him mad. He wished he could be like one of those men who never seem to reason—who get into a track and go scooting through life without doubts.

Should a man ever think of marrying

who has no more enthusiasm than to stop and ask the question, "With how much imperfection will I have to bear?" And could he ever expect to convince himself if he could ask such a question about a girl so attractive as Clara Thompson? Sometimes he would ask himself the question, Why do we esteem love so highly? Isn't it merely an animal passion? A young man goes to church with his thoughts intent on higher things, but a young lady comes in with her parents and sits in front of him. Instead of listening to the sermon as he intended, his eyes will wander to that curl on the back of her neck. She turns her head a little and he sees how the pink of her cheek blends into the white of her neck. Finally she turns so that he can see her red, smiling lips and long, dark lashes. Is the love that is thus called up anything but an animal passion? There are large numbers of cases on record of this kind of love leading to nothing but misery and even death. Love when improperly guided is the cause of as much unhappiness as hatred; perhaps it is more indirect and thus less evident, but it is none the less the cause. There is no doubt,

on the other hand, that hatred when properly directed against evil produces happiness. Why then does the world extol the one and condemn the other?

After enduring this state of mind for a while, he would wheel about to another position. Why should we condemn our animal desires at all? They are our mainspring to action, and reason is only of use to modify them. But when are they properly modified?

A man who marries a woman for her pretty face, only to learn that her intense selfishness is more than a match for his weakness, is nothing but a despicable dupe. (He did not think Clara was selfish, but he put all sorts of hypothetical questions to himself.) The man in the other extreme, who is selfish enough to make a dupe of a generous woman is equally despicable. And is not the man who says, I will marry a woman who has as many faults as I have and no more, equally so? But these hypothetical questions are very inadequate. In real life faults are so unlike that they cannot be called either equal or unequal—they are so unlike that they cannot be compared.

CHAPTER XXV.

The next evening found Gifford at Mr. Thompson's—serious mood and all. He refused the easy chair Clara offered him and took the most uncomfortable one in the room. When she sat down on the sofa he turned sidewise on his chair with his face toward her, and hooked his arm over the standard of the back. Clara did what she could to keep up a conversation, but he only answered in monosyllables and absently drummed on his chair. At last he looked up at her and said: "Some day you will marry me, won't you?"

She turned her face away from him and at the same time laughed a low, gutteral laugh, full of intense excitement. Her muscles were all tense as she raised one hand, then stretched her arm out and let it fall on the sofa. "I don't love you," she said.

Gifford drew a long breath. "Don't you?" was all he said, and that was scarcely audible. Her words had carried complete conviction to him. If he had often

thought that she was frivolous, and had little regard for the truth, he had never thought it possible for anyone to jest about anything so serious. He ceased to look at her, and inclined his head on his hand and sat looking at his other hand as he rubbed it on his knee.

As he did not speak again, she slowly turned her face toward him and when she saw the desolation in his face her exultation left her, and it seemed to her that her life would go out of her. If she merely intended to tantalize him a bit before yielding, she suddenly found it a more serious undertaking than she had thought. She meant to punish him by making him feel some of the uncertainty she had so long suffered, and although she succeeded better than she had desired, consistency demanded that she should go on. "No, I don't love you," she repeated. After a few moments she said: "I am very sorry for you."

"Oh, I don't want you to feel sorry for me," he said, raising his head.

After another interval, she said: "You will get over it, I know."

"Perhaps I will; I don't know." He

looked her in the face with just the shadow of a pitiable smile about his lips."

As he got up and they walked to the door together, Clara felt that he was going from her forever; but all that she could think to say was to repeat her last two sentences. Outside of the door he said a feeble good-bye and walked away.

He went mechanically to the hitch rack and unhitched his horse; but as it had liked the walk home the evening before without a rider much better than with one, it gave him the slip just as he was getting ready to mount and walked off by itself. Gifford, too numb to feel any resentment at the action of the horse, dragged along after it.

Now that the question that he had so recently been trying to dismiss from his mind was decided for him (he could not have been more thoroughly convinced that it was forever decided) and could hurt no one but himself, it seems but natural that he should have felt some relief; but nothing was farther from him. One of his strongest motives (although he had not acknowledged it to himself) for choosing the course he had, was a fear that he might hurt Clara; and

now almost his sole idea was: "I could not have treated her in that way." As he walked home that simple sentence kept repeating itself over and over in his mind. This man, who tried to regulate his life by his better judgment and had often wished that he were less reasonable, so that he would be less worried, was now in a state of mind very much like an imbecile's. Again and again that sentence repeated itself as an accompaniment to the terrible pain he was suffering throughout his whole being.

The fresh night air and the muscular exercise were beneficial, for by the time he had walked the two miles or more necessary to take him home, his mind had commenced to make voluntary efforts to turn to other things. He tried to call up the old emotions that had been the greatest pleasures of his life, but they would not come. He thought of his work on the ranch and of the different parts of it that had been such a keen delight to him but a few days before, and now it all seemed as desolate as a burnt field. There were no pleasant emotions in his whole being; he was as completely burnt out as an exploded cartridge.

CHAPTER XXVI.

After Gifford left, Clara went to her room and cried almost all night; but she reached the depth of her despair before morning and began to revive. Her quick, hopeful nature soon turned to the brighter view and there was an unformed hope in her mind. What had happened was not so much and would be a very little obstacle to an ardent lover; but this hope was very vague. All the bathing she gave her eyes did not remove the traces of tears and she told her mother that she had a headache and did not want any breakfast.

Mrs. Thompson had always screened her daughters, doing most of the household drudgery herself, so that their hands might not show the marks of toil. And especially had she screened her older daughter; not only because she was her favorite child, but from that honest conviction which many mothers have that the oldest daughter must first have her opportunity, even if it

spreads over and almost entirely excludes the opportunities of the others. So what drudgery Mrs. Thompson could not do usually fell upon Minnie's shoulders. When Clara chose to plead a headache and lie in bed, nothing was said except the muttered grumblings from Minnie, which were not heeded.

In the afternoon Clara got up, but being too restless to remain at home, she went to see Mrs. Woodmanse. Her nervousness and unusual tearful appearance told Florence plainly enough that something had gone wrong. When Gifford became the topic of conversation, Clara said: "I do get so tired of hearing him talk through his hat."

"Talk through his hat?" repeated Florence as she sat with her head resting on the back of her easy chair.

"Yes. That is one of the vulgar expressions that Minnie has learned. But I mean that I don't believe that he believes anything he says."

"He does talk a great deal, but he always seems to be very much in earnest."

"Yes, he always seems to be in earnest—that is one of the things I admire about him

—but I don't believe that he believes them."

"You certainly don't mean," said Florence, laughing, as she raised her head and looked at Clara, "that you like him because he is very much in earnest in telling what he doesn't believe?"

Clara blushed and said: "No, I think he is very much in earnest in trying to believe it, but he doesn't succeed. He isn't half as smart as he thinks he is. Just the other day," she went on, "he said he didn't believe in forgiving. I said that I forgave but never forgot; and he said that he forgot but never forgave."

"Oh, he only said that to tease you."

"No, he didn't. He believed it; or believed it as much as he believes any of his horrid theories. He has a horrid theory, that he preaches what he practices, or what we all practice; for he says that we don't practice what we preach, and that our practice is, in the main, much better than our preaching. And in forgiving, he says that we merely preach forgiving and do not practice it; for if we did, we would think as much of mean people as we do of good, which would be an injustice to the good.

The fact that we think more of our best friends than we do of our second best, is a proof that we have really never forgiven our second best friends, as we think we have, for the many little injuries they have done us."

"What does he say of the injuries that our best friends have done us?" asked Florence.

"Oh, I don't know. He is so absurd that it is no use to talk to him. He will always have an answer of some kind. I don't believe he believes a word of it, do you?"

"I don't know. As you say, he will try very hard. He is so eccentric that there is no knowing what he will succeed in believing."

"He seems to have the faculty," said Clara, "of putting everyone at unrest that he comes in contact with."

"I admire intellectual people," she continued, presently, "but not that kind. I wouldn't be his wife for anything. If he ever gets married, the chances are he will make his wife very unhappy, and he will make her live away up there in the mountains where she will never see anyone but

a Chinaman or a coyote, and she will never have the satisfaction of knowing whether he loves her or whether he is only making fun of her for his own amusement."

When Clara went home and found Minnie gone to see some of her friends, and her mother alone in the dining-room sewing, she sat down and they had a long talk. Mrs. Thompson knew very well by Clara's looks that something had happened, and it was not long until she had it all from her. Clara buried her face in her arms on the table and had a long cry after she had told her mother. Mrs. Thompson waited very patiently for Clara's sobbing to become easier, and then said: "I told you when you wanted to quit going with Mr. Gooddale that Gifford was just flirting with you. You would have made a lovely appearance now if you had done as you wished."

Instantly Clara stopped sobbing and looked at her mother with her eyes full of tears. "He is not flirting with me. If you had seen how much in earnest he was and how sad he looked when I told him that I didn't love him, you would say so too."

"Well, what are you crying about, then?"

"Because he will never come back," sobbed Clara.

"Oh, if he loves you he will come back quick enough," said Mrs. Thompson with a confident simper.

"I don't see what makes you say that?" Clara said, looking straight at her mother and forgetting her tears.

"Oh, you can't keep men away when they are in love. A man in love never takes 'no' for an answer."

Mrs. Thompson had her head on one side and a very confident smile on her face; but her expression changed as she went on. "I haven't the least idea that he loves you. Of course he has made you think so. That kind of a man can make a woman believe whatever he chooses. He has grown tired of amusing himself with you, so he chose a time when he knew that you were piqued and knew you would say no, to make some pretense of acting honorably and then get away with his skirts clear."

"I don't believe a word of it," Clara said stoutly, but she began to cry again.

"That kind of a man has no honor whatever. It wouldn't surprise me in the least

if he wasn't in love with Mrs. Woodmanse all the time. Didn't he say that she was the loveliest woman he ever saw?"

"I don't care, he loves me and I know it; but he will never come back," sobbed Clara, with her face in her hands.

"If you had any sense," Mrs. Thompson went on, "you would get married to Mr. Gooddale right away and show Gifford that you didn't care for him. I wouldn't be made the sport of a man like that."

Again Clara straightened up and looked at her mother. "I had rather die than marry Mr. Gooddale."

"Well, it wouldn't do any harm to get engaged to him," said Mrs. Thompson. "You know you only have to snap your fingers and he will come."

Clara's only reply was to bury her face in her arms again and begin to cry.

"You would be safe, anyway," continued her mother. "If Gifford loves you, he will begin to stir himself; and if he doesn't, it would show him he hasn't made such a fool of you as he thought."

"And what would I do if he didn't stir himself as you call it?"

As Mrs. Thompson's only answer was to tilt her head to the other side and simper, Clara went on: "And suppose he really does love me and believes what I told him last evening and never comes to see me, thinking that I have always been in love with Mr. Gooddale?"

"Oh, there is no danger of that. If he loves you he will come back, I can guarantee that; but you can believe me, his only desire is to have all the girls in the country dead after him."

"Well, what is the good of getting engaged to Mr. Gooddale, then?"

"Just to prove to Gifford that you never cared for him. I would show the conceited fool for once where he belongs."

"Well, you haven't told me what I am to do with Mr. Gooddale when I get engaged to him."

"You could marry him or not; just as you like. I think you would be very sensible, though, to marry him. I don't suppose he has anything but his profession, but then he may make you a very good living. He is ambitious enough and makes himself liked. It would put you into the best so-

ciety, and you could do whatever you pleased with him."

As Clara had stopped crying and was looking very thoughtful, Mrs. Thompson went on: "If you would study up a little, you could write his sermons for him. You would be very popular too, and a minister's wife has a great influence. You might get some of the best pulpits in the country. He may be sent to Broadway Methodist church in Los Angeles, and you could go into the best society in the city. That would be better than living with a crazy man away out in the country, even if he has millions."

Clara was more influenced by what her mother said than she would have admitted; and Mrs. Thompson was more influenced by Clara than she realized. Perhaps Gifford did love Clara after all; and if he did she would be very glad of it. There was an attraction about him that she had felt herself, and she could sympathize very much with Clara. Then, he was wealthy, no doubt, and as for his eccentric ideas, he would get over them all right—he would give up the ranch soon enough—that was merely a hobby. But Mrs. Thompson had

her own tactics, and as Clara got up to leave the room she said: "You didn't tell Mrs. Woodmanse that you loved him, did you?"

"No. Why should I?"

"Oh, I didn't want you to. I was only afraid you had. There is no telling what relations may exist between them, and it would do no good. Did you tell her that he had proposed and you had refused him?" she asked a moment later.

"No. Why should I tell her that?"

"Well, it wouldn't do any harm. People only think the more of you if they know you are pretty independent. But I think I will go over and call on Mrs. Woodmanse myself; I haven't seen her for some time."

Mrs. Thompson thought it would be rushing matters a good deal for her to go that afternoon; but she could not wait; and she could go around and stop at Mrs. Adams' on the other side of Mrs. Woodmanse's and pretend that she had been out calling all afternoon and did not know that Clara had been there. Mrs. Thompson was as deft to execute as she was to plan, and was soon sitting on Mrs. Woodmanse's sofa.

Sitting there smiling so innocently, no one would have imagined that she could have thought the wicked thoughts she had just insinuated to Clara.

Florence, in the genuine kindness of her heart, was delighted to see her. Their conversation was concerning a little of everything and everybody in and around Manzanita. Florence always felt some uneasiness that Mrs. Thompson was inclined to gossip; but she thought that she was a good woman, and tried to look over this tendency. Florence could read a novel with as much pleasure as anyone, and feel all the curiosity that is at the bottom of our pleasure in reading one; but to have any curiosity about the little affairs of her neighbors, she denied indignantly.

Mrs. Thompson got dangerously near this ideal line of Florence's, sometimes, but the latter would gently lead the subject around to where she wished.

Mrs. Thompson fulfilled the mission of her call in such a way as she thought would not excite suspicion.

"You and Doctor Woodmanse must come over and see us. You mustn't desert us

entirely since you have a house of your own."

Florence made some polite remark, and Mrs. Thompson went on: "I always feel a great interest in my boarders," she said, with her head tilted to one side and a sweet, simpering smirk on her face. "If I didn't feel an interest in them before I took them, I would never do it, for there is no money in keeping boarders. You must come over and spend the evening soon and bring Mr. Gifford with you." She gave a little extra simper and worked nervously with her parasol as she went on. "If Clara can't love him, we all think he is a very nice young man. Mr. Thompson thinks his wild theories quite a good joke."

When Mrs. Thompson left Florence, she left such a disagreeable flavor of deceit that the latter made haste to forget it. It is as natural for the healthy mind to avoid disagreeable subjects as it is for the healthy body to avoid disagreeable drugs. The subtle process of reasoning by which Mrs. Thompson should so evidently desire to make it known that Clara had refused Mr.

Gifford, and at the same time be fishing to get him back was so repugnant to Florence that she involuntarily turned to pleasanter things.

CHAPTER XXVII.

From the many little things that John communicated to Florence about his practice, she picked up quite a little knowledge of medicine; and seeing this, he placed a high estimation upon her intelligence. He was master of his profession and full of a confidence that was caused not only by his success in the practice, but by his exchange of ideas with men of his profession. This confident position enabled him to look down upon and classify many men below him; and he often thought that Florence was more capable of practicing medicine than some men that he knew who had gone through the colleges.

But this confidence in her ability did not extend beyond his own knowledge; he had no confidence in her in regard to the things of which he was consciously or unconsciously ignorant. He had condemned bitterly the novels she read until he heard her discussing them with Gifford. Before that, he

had gone so far as to read one to see if it were not as bad as he said. This one happened to be Pere Goriot, and he said some things about it to her that are too cruel to repeat; but after hearing Gifford's opinion, he had become reconciled to them. Not only that, but he would have been ashamed to let Gifford know what he had thought of them. Gifford's bold self-reliance had produced a deep impression upon Woodmanse, and he could easily defer to him when he could not to Florence. Many people will say: "Oh, that is just because she was a woman." But that explanation is inadequate when we think how much he feared her opinions before they were married and how much he now feared the opinions of other women who were by far Florence's inferiors. The only explanation possible is that familiarity with a phenomenon always passes for knowledge. People may be ever so ignorant, but if they are familiar with their surroundings they are confident that they know all that is to be known about them. It often seems that the more ignorant they are the greater their confi-

dence. But it is not confined to the ignorant by any means.

John's intimacy with Florence since their marriage made it seem to him that he knew all that she knew. Even if he had tried he could never have made her knowledge of the things of which he had had but little experience seem as true as his knowledge of the things with which he was familiar; but it was a part of his ignorance that he did not try; he never said to himself that she had had opportunities to learn many things of which he must necessarily know next to nothing.

This attitude of John's mind was most conspicuous on the social side of his life where he was so much at sea and where his highest ambitions lay. As his profession, originally, was intended to make for himself a place high up among men, although he had but little time to meet people except in a professional way, what little social intercourse he had was of the gravest importance to him. But in all social questions he felt his ignorance, and it is unfortunate that he could not have placed confidence in his wife. Every time he and Florence made

a visit to the Snowdons he came home unhappy, with the impression that their own house, its furnishings and management were not what the Snowdons' were. If such things were not so common, it would seem strange that a man of Woodmanse's intelligence should be so much influenced by the crude boastings of a woman so ignorant as Mrs. Snowdon; and could not see how superior Florence's simple, refined taste was to the crude, flaunting display of wealth that the Snowdons made.

To Florence, the Snowdons had become very distasteful. Mrs. Snowdon's constant talk about style (this is stylish now, and that is stylish now, was her sole topic of conversation) and it was so evident that she was spreading herself, made it disgusting to Florence. Nothing but John's determination to keep up the acquaintance and her knowledge that if two people wish to live together, each must make more or less sacrifice, induced her to go there at all. Perhaps if she had not been so firm in this conviction, and in the opinion that people must differ, and had been more willing to contend for what she felt to be right, she might

in time have made some impression upon his strong, unreasonable bias. It is certain that the little she did say made none.

One day after they had made a visit to the Snowdons, John mentioned, as he had done before after similar visits, that he would like to have their table loaded (this was Florence's word, not his) with china and silverware like the Snowdons, and to have as many servants; as well trained, too, and not the beastly, awkward thing they usually had in their kitchen and dining-room.

"And perhaps you would like to tilt back in your chair and boast as Mr. Snowdon does; and I, with a little practice, might be able to do it as easily as Mrs. Snowdon."

Florence had no sooner said this than she wished she could recall it.

"Well, even boasting will help people to get along in this world, and although I don't believe in tooting one's own horn too much, I don't see why the Snowdons should be ashamed of living well. They do live well, and you know it. We might live just as well if you only thought so. You do nothing but spend your money for novels

and your time reading them, while the servant in the kitchen is not half trained. That half-hearted way you have of going at them is only an invitation for them to impose upon you. If you would take some pains and train them right from the start, as I told you to, they could be made to do half-way decently, at least. I don't see what you are going to do with your money if you are not willing to get something decent for the house. Why don't you spend it for something that will do you some good—something that we can make a respectable appearance with?"

"The things we have," thought Florence, "are very nice, if they are not so gorgeous as the Snowdons'." But she would not say it, as she thought she had said too much already; and they had talked over this subject so often before.

"If you worked half as hard as I do we might be able to make a decent appearance, and not be mortified to death every time we have the Snowdons here."

"Mortified to death," thought Florence, but she restrained herself from speaking.

"Why in the name of hell can't you say something?"

Florence looked into John's frowning face. "Is there any use?" she asked. "One word only leads to another, and each thinks the other more and more unreasonable."

"Oh, yes, you think I am always unreasonable, and I suppose you will go along and do just as you damned please. You never pay any attention to what I say."

"You know that that is unjust, John. I don't believe that quarreling ever helps people to agree."

"There's no danger of our quarreling too much. You just close your teeth on the bit and sail serenely along."

"It seems to me," said Florence, "absolutely necessary that people should differ in their opinions, and I think that you should defer to me once in a while."

"They could agree if they were reasonable; but of course I am the one that is always unreasonable."

"I don't think you unreasonable on account of the opinions you hold, but in thinking it would be so easy for me to give up mine and adopt yours; and you are un-

reasonable in displaying so much feeling, because I can't."

"Hell! It is enough to drive a saint mad to see how indifferent you are to everything I say." He leaped to his feet and left the room. Taking his hat and coat from the hall he went to his buggy, and, getting in, he struck the horse a blow that cut from shoulder to hip, and that fiery animal flew down the road like a cannon ball. The people wondered who was sick, as they saw him pass, and regretted that they had not stopped him to ask; for someone must be dangerously sick or he would not be driving so fast.

"Why in the world should a man encumber himself with a wife," thought John, "and especially one with no ambition whatever. One that does nothing but sit around the house from morning till night and read novels. Well, she can do what she pleases with her damned money; I don't want it, but I don't see what good I can ever hope to get out of what I do make, with a dead weight like that always in my way."

In this way he raged till he reached a little cabin up in the mountains beyond Ver-

dugo. Here he found that nothing had been done to relieve the sick child as he had directed. Well, he would see that it was done—he would have that satisfaction. He knew it would be his only pay for this work. He stood in the middle of the cabin and ordered around the tousled-headed man and the two slatternly women, his wife and daughter; all three moving faster than they ever had before. Water was brought from the ditch, and after it had been properly heated over a gum-twig fire, the child was bathed. After everything was made as clean and comfortable as possible, he left directions that they were not likely to forget soon.

When he came out of the cabin and was on the road again, his anger had cooled, but he was sick at heart and had no desire to go home. When he got to the main road that passes through Verdugo from Los Angeles to Crescenta Canada, he turned toward the latter place. He had no business to take him in that direction, but it was away from home, and he had a desire to get as far away as possible. It seemed to him a long time since he had been over this road, and it

recalled some of the drives he and Florence had taken. This memory of those happy days recalled some of the great love he had had for her at that time.

But even the men that are most accustomed to reasoning and of analyzing the bias of their own emotions find it impossible to get rid of the personal equation; and as John was not a reasoning man, his strong emotions made it impossible for him to see his and Florence's relations in the light a disinterested person might see them. He thought that her disregard for his wishes was a sure evidence that she did not love him. He knew that she called the limpid regard she had for him love, but to him it seemed more like a mockery. Even prejudiced as he was, he could not but feel that she had been generous at times, but her generosity appeared to him more like pity than an evidence of love. She had consented to marry him only because she had seen his great love for her, and had felt sorry for him. All of her acts of generosity since appeared in the same light. A woman that really loved would adopt her husband's ideas by a process of absorption. But Flor-

ence had never shown any confidence in his judgment; she would not trust him to invest her money, and showed a complete disregard for all he said about everything. He felt these things rather than thought them. If he had been able to have made them more a part of the mind that is freed from feeling, he would have been able to reverse his arguments to some extent—to have applied the arguments as a test to his love, that he was applying to hers. But it was a part of his nature that he could not do this.

As he was so firmly convinced that she had never loved him, he could not understand why he had been so determined to marry her. Why had he ever degraded himself as he had to plead with her to marry him as though his life depended upon it? He could not understand how he could have loved her, knowing that she did not love him. It seemed necessary to him now that a man's love should be returned if it were to live. He knew that his was dead.

But she said she loved him, and sometimes it seemed a little as though she did. Well, if she did, why didn't she prove it?

He ground his teeth together with a determination to make her prove it. If they did not love, they would not live together, that was all—he would not live with a woman who did not love him and have his whole life ruined. He felt that he could never love again, but he could go away and begin the practice of his profession somewhere else—he could succeed at that—that was all he would have, but that was all he could have here; and in place of the constant torment Florence was to him, there would be peace.

In the meantime Florence was confined to the narrow limits of the house with emotions no less strong than John's, though they were pitched in a very different key. She did not think any less of him because his taste was so primitive; he had many sterling qualities that more than made up for all he lacked in that way. And she was too modest to take any credit to herself because her circumstances and inclinations had placed her in a position to see the difference between respectability and vulgarity. Her taste did not seem above criticism or improvement, but what John sug-

gested was so unattractive that she could not think of adopting it. Would it do any good if she could? She did not think that she had ever made any great sacrifices to him (it seemed to her that any great sacrifice on the part of either would be very much out of place in their circumstances), but he seemed to be perfectly unconscious that she had ever made any at all. If she should sacrifice everything to him, would he appreciate it any more or would their lives be made any happier by it? Would she not even then be driven to the extreme she was striving so hard to avoid? Was it not inevitable that there would be a difference in their opinions and actions that would be sufficient ground for his disparaging remarks? And would she not be driven to defend herself—to tell him everything that could be said in her favor—to boast of her good actions to balance the disagreeable things he said? This future that presented itself to her as being so unavoidable was the most miserable outlook she could imagine. Poverty and physical suffering of any kind seemed less disagreeable to her.

She could not understand his actions;

she could not understand his willingness to leave all others a sphere of action and her none. She had seen enough of his relations with the people among whom he practiced to know that he was extremely scrupulous in humoring all of their hobbies. Did he do this because he wished to keep their practice? Was he a gentleman merely for mercenary purposes? Must she think that John was worse than other men, or were all men more primitive in their households than they were in the world at large? Was there a refining influence in business competition that was not to be found in the family?

As she could not admit that John was worse than other men, she naturally came to the conclusion that all men would appear more primitive if seen in their family circles than when seen in the business world. If they were more primitive, would only primitive methods avail anything? Must there be something to exert the influence that their mercenary desires or their feeling of dependence exerted in their business life? Would she have failed so deplorably if she had not restrained all of

those emotions that she thought so degrading? If she had given way more to the desire to justify her actions, it might have produced some effect; and if she had given way to the tears she found so hard to restrain, it might have excited his pity. Most men, if not all, have more pity for a howling dog at which a stone has been cast than they have for a horse that patiently plods its life away. Even the penetrative power of a cannon and its cartridge cannot be known until it has been properly touched off. She knew that John had a great deal of sympathy for the weak; but unless it was properly appealed to, it might lie there dormant all of their lives as far as she was concerned.

The feeling that prompts an appeal for pity or sympathy is one of the most deep-seated in human nature; but to make use of it seemed to Florence too low to be considered. A life full of quarrels and floods of tears was impossible to her. It was as necessary to be free from these primitive emotions with the members of one's own household, in the privacy of the home, as it was before the public eye. But alone in her

own room, she would give way to the tears she had so long, and, as it may seem to many, unnaturally controlled.

As there were no tears nor other appeals for sympathy between Florence and John, there was none of the making-up that is doubtless the source of the most exquisite delight that the newly-married experience. When he came into the house after one of these storms, to all appearances he had forgotten it, and Florence would hasten to speak of other things. As he was a man of but few words at any time, and did not read the books that she read, her task was none of the lightest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When Gifford found that he could not work nor take any interest in his work on the ranch, he went to Santa Monica and remained a few weeks to wear off his disappointment. As he returned home he took the train to Los Angeles, where he had arranged for a horse and buggy to meet him. While he was walking along one of the crowded streets, he saw Clara. As he was still sore from the thrust she had given him, he could not smile at her before they came near enough to speak, as he had always done before; but she was more eager than of old, for she was anxious to renew their friendship.

When she came near enough for him to make the formal bow he fully intended, some people in the crowd passed between them, and he was compelled to pass on without recognizing her. She went on, smarting with the feeling that he intentionally avoided looking at her, and he, with

the consciousness that awkward circumstances had given her a false impression.

Several weeks later the ladies of the Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church gave a social. It was just before the performance began when Gifford went in and the room was nearly full; but he succeeded in getting a seat in one corner farthest from the stage. Some members of the church objected to holding such entertainments in the church, and this was held in the town hall. The part of the program that pleased the audience most was the Sunflower song. Ten girls, ranging in size from a very small one to one almost grown, put their faces in holes cut in the center of ten artificial sunflowers pasted on a screen, behind which the girls stood. To see their pretty, bright faces pop into view as each sang her part of the song, "One little, two little, three little sunflowers," and so forth, to the tune of "Ten Little Indian Boys," was very amusing to everyone.

Clara Thompson, Nell Hanna and Miss Newcome, who was visiting Nell, sang "The Farmer Boy," with its whistling chorus, and surprised everyone by their proficiency

at whistling. There were several recitations and songs, and some piano music. Miss Newcome sang too songs in a sweet, strong, soprano voice.

At one side of the room there was a long table prepared for supper; when the performance on the stage was completed, an invitation was given to the people to fill up the seats at the table and supper would be served. Although the table reached from the stage to the back of the hall, it was not large enough to accommodate more than a third of the people at once; and as the rest were assured that they would have their turn in good time, they broke up into social groups.

Mr. Gooddale had presided. He had announced each part of the program, and now he was seeing to everything and everybody —to Clara Thompson most of all. But Clara and Mrs. Thompson also were paying a great deal of attention to Mr. Gooddale. Nell Hanna and her friend sat down quite near Gifford, but they did not seem to see him, and he got up and went to them.

"Oh, I have a crow to pick with you," Miss Newcome said when she saw him.

"When you came in I nearly jerked my head off nodding at you and you looked right by and wouldn't recognize me."

After Gifford had listened to Miss Newcome rattle away for half an hour or more, Doctor and Mrs. Woodmanse came up and Miss Newcome cried: "Oh, Mrs. Woodmanse! you look just too lovely. I don't see how you can be so contented to live out here in this little village after living in Chicago. I should think you would just die. How can you stand it?"

While Miss Newcome gushed over Florence, Gooddale joined the group and Woodmanse said that they had all better go to supper as the table was now almost empty for the second time. Gifford started with Nell Hanna and Mr. and Mrs. Woodmanse followed, leaving Gooddale to bring Miss Newcome.

Clara Thompson was helping the older members of the society to wait on the table. When it was almost deserted for the last time, Nell Hanna said: "Aren't you tired, Clara? Why don't you sit down and rest? Everybody has been waited on now."

"I guess I might as well," Clara said,

dropping into a chair. She had not given Gifford an opportunity to speak to her before since the time he refused, as she thought, to recognize her in Los Angeles.

A number of the women who had been waiting on the table, now sat down to eat and talk over their trials and the success of the evening. "I'm glad we've made something by all this hard work," Mrs. Hanna said.

"How much did we make?" asked Mrs. Adams.

"Forty-two dollars and something."

"Well, we've earned it all, three or four times."

"Yes, but it's the only way we could get it. So many are willing to help in this way when they wouldn't think of giving a cent in cash. I will be glad when the church debt is paid."

"I didn't see any need of building the church so soon, any way," said Mrs. Adams. "Some of us have hardly got houses over our heads yet, and nothing in sight to live on."

"Three churches are a good many for a

little village like Manzanita," admitted Mrs. Hanna.

"Well, I should think so."

"Oh, Manzanita would be unbearable without the churches," said Mrs. Thompson. "And then they increase the price of the land more than they cost."

"Yes, increase it for Captain Walker," said Mrs. Adams. "I don't see that they are going to make our trees bear any more."

"Well, you know it brings the best class of people here to settle," said Mrs. Thompson. "You certainly want good neighbors, don't you?"

"Yes, I believe in all sorts of luxuries when one can afford them."

The children formed no inconspicuous part of the social. They were turned loose to have a good time, and dashed madly about the hall in their play, running against anyone who might be in their way; to say nothing of the noise and confusion they made. The older young people did not let this interfere with their pleasure. A number of them played some games at one side of the hall, and as Gifford started home, he saw Minnie Thompson and Charley Sales in a

cozy corner joyously happy and apparently unconscious of everyone but themselves.

"Give me my handkerchief," Minnie said.

"I haven't got your handkerchief," said Charley, laughing and talking so much at the same time that it was difficult to distinguish his words.

"You have too," declared Minnie.

"No, I haven't," said Charley, still laughing.

"Now you think you are smart."

"No, I don't," laughed Charley.

"I think you are horrid," Minnie pouted.

CHAPTER XXIX.

When Gifford went into the store one morning, he found it full of the citizens of Manzanita and vicinity waiting for their mail long before it arrived. Many of them would go away without any, but the next day would find them there again (if they were not very busy) when the daily mail arrived.

The conveyance that brought the mail that day brought Captain Walker.

"How do you do, Doctor?" he said, shaking hands. "How are the sick?"

From Woodmanse he went on among the men that were standing about inside of the store. "It isn't worth while to ask how you are, Thompson. Doctor, did you ever see such a picture of perfect health and strength? What wouldn't I give to be like that. How are you, Adams? How are your lemon trees? I was out past your place the other day, and I thought I never saw finer looking lemon trees in my life.

Beveredge, how's that invalid wife of yours?"

"She's about the same," said Beveredge.

"That ruddy face of yours says that you have nothing to complain of."

"Because I've got a red face is no sign that I have nothing to complain of. Life isn't worth much when a man can't make a living."

"We all expect to find you complaining in Heaven, Beveredge."

"If Heaven hasn't any better waterworks than Manzanita, you needn't be surprised,"

"You grumblers ought to plant some trees or something that don't require so much water."

"That's good advice to give a man after selling him land with plenty of water."

"We have got plenty of water if you know how to use it."

"Yes, plenty for sage brush."

Walker had gone on shaking hands and complimenting everyone, with these running remarks to Beveredge thrown in.

Old Man Williams now came into the store, and seeing Walker, he asked abruptly in his loud, harsh voice: "Captain, what about this water business? We want to

know why that work isn't going on up there?"

"I don't know," said Walker, forgetting to shake hands with Williams. "Ask Doctor Woodmanse here, and Thompson; they're directors of the Water Company."

"They say they considered the matter at their last meeting and decided to have it done. But nothing has been done yet, and somebody said you had put a stop to it."

"Oh—it's about that matter they had up before the last meeting—I wasn't there, and their proceedings were not just regular; we will have to reconsider it before our next meeting."

"We ought to have twenty men up there at work now, if we are ever going to have any more water, and everybody wants more." The old man's voice was so harsh, it seemed as if he were quarreling when he had no such intention.

"Well, you will have to talk that over with Woodmanse and Thompson, they are your water directors," said Walker, trying to dismiss the subject.

"You are one of the directors, too—Woodmanse and Thompson are all right, but we

don't want you to be putting a stop to what they have done."

"Well, the truth is, gentlemen," said Walker, irritated into making a defense, "we have a fine water system in Manzanita and we can't afford to go to any more expense."

"A fine water system," sneered Beveredge.

"Yes, we have a good water system. Look at Allesandro, and look at Onterio, and a hundred other places that I might name."

"And look at the Mojave desert," laughed Gifford.

"That's right, Jim, speak up," said Williams.

"And look at the Colorado desert and the Humbolt desert and a thousand places that might be named," said Beveredge, glowing with his sarcasm.

Walker realized that the farmers were all against him, and he felt it necessary to make a stand, as he knew that Woodmanse was slipping from him, and he was uncertain about Thompson.

"The men that would find fault with as good a water system as we have here," he

said, "would find fault with anything; and I am not going to be dictated to by a lot of loud talkers and chronic grumblers."

This was said with such a fierce look that Beveredge stepped back as though he were afraid of being struck. But Williams was not to be scared in that way.

"If we have got a good water system that need not prevent us from having a better one, and ever'body wants more water," he said.

"I don't care a damn if they do want more water; I am not going to throw away any more money on this tract. I have nearly ruined myself now improving it."

"You have nearly ruined yourself improving it?" Gifford began. "You started a subscription list to build the town hall. You, who own several hundred acres with not a building or a tree on them; and you asked these men to build you a town hall, and they did it—these men that have put more dollars' worth of improvements on their land than their land is worth, and every dollar's worth of which is worth hundreds to you in the rise in value of your land. I say for you, because it is worth to you more than

it is to them, as the value of your land is to theirs. You, I believe, were liberal enough to start the subscription by taking twenty dollars worth of shares. That is the way you have ruined yourself improving the tract. These men here have done the rest. Charley Sales has done more to improve this tract than you have—he has given more of his hard earned dollars, besides setting an example of honest dealing —something you will never be accused of. All we ask is that you do your part and not be a stumbling block to necessary improvements."

"Improvements that you choose to call necessary; but I don't see it that way. I am willing to do what is right—I have always had the good of the tract at heart, but I have no money to spend on unnecessary improvements. Woodmanse and Thompson voted the last improvements over my head, and I think they should have some regard for my interest this time."

"If the devil had your tongue, Heaven would soon be as lonesome as an alkali desert," said Gifford, showing more irritation than was usual with him during an

argument. "You know very well that you have dictated to Thompson and Woodmanse all the time. You consented to the last improvements to see if you could not stop Williams' loud talk; his water meetings were giving your land a bad reputation and spoiling your sales. If you wish for us to continue in the same direction we can do so. We can put a notice in the Los Angeles papers and call out all of the non-resident land owners to attend our water meetings."

Walker had been fidgeting uneasily about and Gifford following in his attempt to look him in the eyes. Before Gifford had finished his last sentence, Walker broke into a laugh which was more forced than usual. Although his attempt to make it jolly was evident enough, it seemed almost hysterical.

"It isn't necessary that we should go that far," he said in his sweetest tones. "If we must have water, we must have it, that's all; we must do what we can. But we must take time—we mustn't do anything in haste."

"These men have taken time now, until they have worn their patience out."

"I have no available means right now, and you mustn't cramp me—we must not hurry."

"You expect these men you have always wiped your feet on to stand with their hats in their hands while you take time. How many men have brought their long years of savings to you and you have taken it as first payments on land that you knew was not worth the deferred payments; and upon which they could not possibly make the interest, to say nothing of the other payments. Did you ever give one of them time? How many have you sent away penniless, with their families dependent upon them? Can you count them on the fingers of both hands? You laugh when they meet you on the street, and refuse to speak to you. Now you come to these men with your sweet smile and ask them not to cramp you."

Gifford had warmed up so much he could not be patient to hear what Walker might answer. As he moved toward the door Walker said: "We must do what is

best for the tract, and if everyone wants more water——"

Gifford cut him short with: "Talk to Mr. Williams, he's our water meeting convener."

As Gifford left the store, Old Man Williams said: "Jim is right, Cap; we've got to have more water, and you've got to pay your part. It's nothing but right."

"Yes, yes, I know," said Walker, impatiently, "but here is the point." He laid his hand affectionately on Williams' shoulder and assumed a very confidential manner. "What that bombastic young ass says has nothing to do with the matter. Your place is mortgaged to me and mine is all mortgaged to the men I bought of. Now, a man of your varied experience can see that it won't do to have those mortgages foreclosed. It would tie everything up—perhaps for years. It might lead to endless litigation before a proper title could be made to the land. Now it would be much better to let these things run along in their proper channel and not try to force them."

"But we've got to have more water," Williams put in.

"Certainly, certainly—my dear Mr. Williams, but you see these things require time. If you can trust me you shall have your water, and you will get it quicker than you will if you try to force things."

"Well, that's all we ask—more water."

"You shall have it—you shall have it."

CHAPTER XXX.

Woodmanse left the store with Gifford and they walked together to the former's office. Florence was near, pruning rose-bushes, and came forward to see if John had any mail for her; but before she had time to get it, Gifford extended his hand and said: "Congratulate me, Mrs. Woodmanse."

"Why should I congratulate you?" Florence asked, with wide-open eyes.

"Because, I've been quarreling."

"Well—that is the last thing I am likely to congratulate you for."

"Why not?" he said, with mock earnestness. "Don't you believe that people should try to improve? Then they must try in the direction in which they most need improvement. Didn't I say I was going to follow Old Man Williams' example in everything?"

"Have you stolen any water yet?" Florence asked, and John laughed.

"That is for you Manzanita people to find out. But I had a fine quarrel this morning in the true Old Man Williams' style."

After Florence had taken her mail and John went into the office, she and Gifford loitered toward the house as they talked.

"You should have been there. It would have been a liberal education to you," he said.

"I am very thankful that I wasn't," she answered. She never looked prettier than she did as she went on, her face was so full of earnestness. "I would have been ashamed of our common humanity. I think if there is anything degrading and low it is quarreling."

Gifford answered quickly; the air of mockery had not all left his face and voice. "I disregard the application of your words to myself in my fear for you. I have just been able to locate you. You are a product of the too pure morality of the Christians. Of course you know," he went on, "that when the Christians recognized the weakness of the flesh, as they call it, they went to the other extreme. At any rate, they all preached it, and a few practiced it. And

although it was only practiced by a few, it doubtless followed a line of descent, and after a number of generations an abnormal conscience was inherited. This abnormal conscience now crops out even among people who are professed agnostics; and that's what is troubling the subject in hand."

Florence gave a slight exclamation of sarcasm, but Gifford went on without a change of countenance.

"This world-scorning morality was bad enough in people who put their faith in another world, but in people who know no world but this, it is absurdly abnormal. To have lost the other world and yet not have attained this is a position in ethereal space which is not a very firm footing, to say the least. It may do for a Christian to be a pessimist—in fact, I believe that they try to glory in it; but it is entirely out of place in an agnostic."

"My worthy high priest," said Florence, "that is very pretty philosophy, but I fail to see the application."

"The application is just this: for a woman to confess herself too good to quarrel is

as bad as for a hobo to confess himself too good to work."

"But as there are other people," Florence answered, "who do not work besides the hobo, might there not be others too good to quarrel, who could help to elevate the world by a good example?"

"Perhaps," reluctantly admitted Gifford. "But it must be a miserable existence. I would as soon have a pair of soft, flimsy, tear-soaked-handkerchief kind of hands that I would be unable to get down and dig in the earth with as to have an impractical conscience. I want to first learn to love the world as it is, and to be equipped to work in it as it is, and then I think I will stand a better chance of improving it."

"Different people have their different methods," Florence answered. "For my part, I would much prefer to get above the world and try to lift it up than to get below it and try to push it up."

"As you say, that is pretty philosophy, but I fail to get the application. How much good would your good example do Captain Walker?"

"Oh, he is an exception."

"No, he is the rule, and you are the exception. If you wish to live in the world you must be of the world, worldly."

"That may do for you," said Florence, "but some people prefer to be unspotted from the world."

"That is exactly what you are," said Gifford, smiling broadly. "And that is what I am trying to warn you against. All good is fitness to the world and is consequently worldly. To be unspotted from the world would be to be unspotted from the good as well as from the evil."

"So that is what you think of me, is it?"

"Certainly—that is what I have been trying so hard to tell you. The world is full of weak, erring people, and you could make them better by quarreling with them if you would."

"Oh—if that is the only way in which I can improve the world it may go unimproved as far as I am concerned. I would much prefer the Christian method of loving one another."

"Well, I can't complain of that as being too unworldly, but it is a vein that has certainly been over-worked." When they

got to the house they sat down on the veranda and Gifford went on:

"There is no word in the English language so abused as that word 'love.' But perhaps it is not so much the word as it is the thought that is confused. It is proverbial that a mother's love is just as great for her wayward child as it is for her best; and that feeling is identical with the feeling that the mother hen has when she pecks the chickens of the other hens to death. In mankind it is so bolstered up by higher emotions, mainly the vague emotion called a sense of justice, that it does not so often lead to evil as it does in the lower animals. But it is a shame that it should be allowed to sail under such false colors and to get the credit that is due to a better emotion: to kindness of heart, which is the real goodness that endures."

When Gifford ceased speaking, Florence's eyes were turned away from him with that expression which sees nothing and suggests wandering thoughts, and she asked, without a change of expression: "What was it that the fox said about the grapes?"

Although Gifford laughed, he blushed

also. "It's very unkind of you to pry open the so recently made fracture in my heart."

"I supposed you thought all women were destitute of mercy, and I had to act my part. But do you think that the fox really tried to get the grapes?"

"Why, certainly he tried. I have never doubted that."

"I suppose you are right. He tried as that particular fox was capable of trying; but don't you suppose that another fox came along and got those very grapes?"

"Perhaps. I suppose they were made for some one."

"There's no doubt about it. And the fox that got them had some of the snap and go about him that a real man has; such a man for instance as Mr. Williams."

Gifford looked at her, smiling, but attempted no reply. She went on: "Judging from the impractical results of some people's actions, my ancestors were not the only ones who lived in too rarefied an atmosphere. In this world it is unfortunate to be too good."

When Florence first twitted Gifford she was astonished at her own temerity; but

as she went on, the desire grew—he seemed so opinionated that it made her want to hurt him.

"To a man who has been properly trained," she continued, "and can see the beauty in the cruel monstrosities of this world and can appreciate their 'creative power,' the only difficulty in the way of finding a wife is the difficulty of finding one cruel enough and mean enough so that he can have one of the worldly deformities which he admires so much ever at hand; an obstruction in his path which is worthy of his efforts to surmount so that he may never feel any danger of ennui entering his life."

"Perhaps the pleasure is in avoiding the elephant and not in being trampled under foot," Gifford meekly suggested.

"The true sportsman thinks where there is no danger, the prize is unworthy of the effort; and how much more pleasure it would be to have a real rogue elephant in the house with you so you could always be sure of your sport."

"It's very evident that your dislike for controversy is not because you are not an expert; perhaps it is because the seed you

have sown has fallen in barren places. If circumstances had thrown you into a woman's convention——"

"That's right. The sex is always a good target."

Gifford laughed, but became serious as he said: "There is one gap in the hedge I must try to mend. To know that I do not know may not prevent me from thinking I know that much more than some other people. But it does seem to me that it is inconsistent with self-satisfaction." His face lost the half mocking smile it usually wore when talking, and became so serious that it was almost melancholy. "It seems to be in the deciding of real, living questions that I fall short; but so long as I know that I do not know, I must procrastinate."

"Oh, is that it?" said Florence.

"That is it. The questions that are too much for me, and there are many, I wait for nature to decide."

"And nature will decide them in favor of the man who does know," Florence said.

"I don't doubt that."

CHAPTER XXXI.

John's profession kept him away from the house so much, Florence was alone with her books the greater part of the time. One day when she had been reading for a long time, she discovered that while her eyes were following the words, her mind had composed an elaborate argument with Gifford, and that she had refuted all he had said about quarreling. She dismissed the subject with disgust and went back to her book with determination. When she found the place where her mind had ceased to follow her eyes, she began again, and by a persistent effort succeeded in keeping them together for a few lines only; then Gifford's smile came between her and the page, and again began an argument with her.

She knew his mocking smile was not because he did not believe what he was saying, but because he was timid and half ashamed to mention his radical ideas to others. But because she knew he believed what he had

said, only made the subject more disagreeable to her. What was tormenting her as much as anything was that the idea that he was right and she wrong had suggested itself to her more than once. She sometimes thought that she was deficient as a wife because she could not contend with John; not because she thought it a wifely duty, but because it seemed a symptom of love. For was not what she sometimes called John's desire to crush out her sphere of action, because to him love was so close a bond of union? If love was to her what it was to him, would she wish to live an independent life to the extent she did? If she loved as she should, would she not wish to impose all of her ideas upon John just as he did his upon her?

Then there was the more general suggestion. The whole world sometimes seemed to be engaged in a contention. Above the physical struggle for existence there seemed a mental and moral struggle for the existence of ideas and principles. Ideas are subject to the law of variation the same as the physical world; and it is their contention which selects the ones that are to sur-

vive—to become the source of action and a part of the movement of the universe. And it is a corollary of this law (like its prototype in the physical world) that the greatest contention is between the people who are most intimately related; for it is there that the variation of ideas is first seen, and it is there that those which are to survive must first assert themselves and those which are to perish must be put down.

Florence had ample illustrations of this law in the books she read. If it were a scientific or philosophical work, the writer was contending for his ideas and opposing those that differed from him. And if it were a novel, the author was picturing a contention of some kind; sometimes the emotions pictured were primitive and sometimes cultivated; but always it was a contention. She also had illustrations in the real life she saw about her. The little village of Manzanita that she had thought so lifeless at first, she now knew to be full of men contending for what they thought was right. The women's public affairs were the same; in their church societies and entertainments there was a variety of opinions as to the

way in which everything should be executed, even to the minutest details.

But these things did not seem so bad; she did not enter into the spirit of contention in the books she read, enough to find it painful; and the little public affairs of the village she could avoid if the wrangle became disagreeable. It was the corollary to the general law, the more violent contention of the people most intimately related that was so repugnant—it was when the varied opinions stood stark and glaring at one another within the household. Even when she thought she knew the way in which John would judge an action, and thought she was acting more according to his idea than her own, his criticism would appear from some unexpected quarter and surprise her. He apparently never thought of keeping these opinions to himself, but mentioned them upon the first opportunity. It is true that the incidents that prompted them were always varying, but still it seemed that she might be able to prophesy a little as to what they would be.

The only conclusion at which she arrived was, if she were wrong she must remain

wrong; if she had inherited an abnormal conscience, she could not hope to remedy it in one generation. If it were a part of the law of the world for each individual to contend for the variety of ideas that comes to him, she had been born too weak to fulfill her part. If these ideas were not potent enough to induce her to quarrel, they helped to increase the feeling that he was right and she wrong; and they helped to increase her helplessness when she most needed her strength.

As the weeks went by after Gifford's return from Santa Monica and he did not go back to see Clara, Mrs. Thompson's heart was grieved to see her going about the house with red eyes, and she was irritated into saying more than she believed. It was to one of her neighbors that she intimated that Clara might have been induced to marry Gifford if she had not thought that he was too devoted to Mrs. Woodmanse. And it was this same kind neighbor who told Florence what Mrs. Thompson had said.

To Florence it came like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, and she was still dazed when John, having heard from some

source what Mrs. Thompson had said, told her that she had no one to blame but herself. What Mrs. Thompson said was as nothing to Florence, compared to John's actions about it. If she had attempted his life, he could not have seemed more injured. His mood was so terrible that poor Florence could say nothing in her defense. And what could she say? Her actions had been as open as the day and everybody was privileged to see them and judge them. It did not seem possible to her that anyone could see them otherwise than in the innocent light in which she saw them. John had been a witness of all her friendly intercourse with Gifford, and had tacitly if not avowedly approved of it; and now the minute some one had cast a slur upon it, he had turned against her and was treating her more cruelly than anyone—many times more cruelly than it was possible for anyone else to treat her.

This attitude of John's mind was not so uncommon as many people may think. Those who have the least confidence in themselves are the ones who are never ready to put confidence in the members of their

families. And it is not because they do not love them; in fact it is an evidence of love for it comes from the same source as a lack of self-confidence, and is because their families are a part of themselves. John Woodmanse had no confidence in his knowledge of social laws, but this does not mean that he doubted. Doubting suggests a wavering from one opinion to another, and this John never did. In the absence of knowledge and judgment of his own he immediately adopted those of someone else; and that someone else was never Florence, for she was a part of himself. In this case there was not the least shadow of a doubt. Florence had disgraced them both for all time to come. The time went on (it seemed to Florence it was to be without an end), and he never came into the house without surly looks and more surly words. Florence never attempted to analyze his bias, and only felt the cruelty of his position. As much as she was given to doubting, she never for a moment thought that she had done anything to regret. She detested Mrs. Thompson for her low insinuations, and was

amazed at John for paying any attention to them.

Upon one occasion he said to her: "Well, you had no business to give her an opportunity to talk about you. People not only have to live right, but they have to live above suspicion."

"Do you think that I haven't lived above suspicion?" Florence asked with extreme, almost tragic earnestness.

"No; but Mrs. Thompson must have had suspicions of some kind or she wouldn't have talked."

"Is there any process of self-extinction possible to keep some people from having suspicions? Or is there any way to foresee such suspicions so that we can avoid them?"

"Well, Mrs. Thompson is a very good woman in her way, and everybody will believe her."

"In her way," Florence repeated bitterly. "Mr. Gifford has never been in the house except when you brought him. But she and Clara are fascinated with him, and they imagine everyone else as susceptible to his charms as they are. Now, since he has

eluded their slippery grasp, they have to account for it in their slippery way, and they think it is as easy for everyone else to be deceitful as it is for them. Clara is nothing but a child, and thinks all the world is centered in her lover, and instead of her mother teaching her to win him by honesty and sincerity, she teaches her to try to win him by deceit and trickery; and then, when they fail, they heap their venom upon someone else." Florence was surprised and mortified to hear herself make this long speech. John had been a witness of these things, and if he were unable to see them in their true light, could anything that she might say help him? But it was the method that instinct prompted which she abominated: putting someone else down to lift herself up. The fact that that someone else seemed to her about as low down as one could get, did not clear her conscience any; for the deeper they were in the mire, the more need that no one should give them a push. Let each one stand proudly upon his own actions was Florence's rule; but John, by the surprising attitude he had taken, had caused these crude instincts, which she dis-

liked so much, to pop out—instincts which the highest culture can only cover up in some dark corner.

But John's next words would have been more surprising to her than any if she had not heard them so often. He was walking back and forth across the room with a white, set face. "It doesn't make a damned bit of difference; you don't love me, and never have."

"Why, John! How can you say that?"

"Because you never have. You didn't love me when you married me, and you never have since. I was a fool for insisting that you should marry me."

"John, you know I love you. I have always loved you. Our loves may be different as our natures are different—yours is more ardent than mine, as your nature is more ardent, but mine is more considerate."

Again the primitive man had surprised the primitive woman; she had tried to hold up her love by pulling down upon his.

But John was still walking the floor and was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he did not hear or did not heed. "You have

never loved me. You have made my life miserable. You have been a curse to me. I wish that I had never seen you, or that I might go away and never see you again. A life like this is a living misery. It was bad enough before; but now, since you have brought this scandal upon us, it is unendurable."

He went out and left Florence alone with those terrible words crushing her poor, wounded heart.

It may be due to the uninitiated, after such an outburst of cruel words as this from John, to explain that love is not a complete antidote to anger. The most scientific definition would probably be to say that love and anger (or hatred, as nothing but hatred can exist in the human heart at the same time with anger) are one; and are like the alternating current of electricity. One who is what is called "in love," merely contains more volts and the alternating current is more deadly. So John's harsh words were no evidence of a lack of love.

But it must be remembered that Florence was also in love; if not with the strength of passion that John displayed, it must be

admitted that she was to some extent—enough for the alternating current to be sufficiently deadly. His cruel words were sufficient to drive out the love from her heart and to produce the invariably accompanying impression that he had ceased to love her. But she had long ago seen that, although his love was the kind which commonly bears the name, it was not a love with true knowledge and appreciation. The part of her nature that she was trying to cultivate was the part that he failed to appreciate; in fact, it seemed that her effort to control her emotions was what irritated him most.

It is little wonder that she believed all that he had just said to her, and was bowed down with an insupportable affliction. If she had made his life so unhappy and there was no happiness in her own, what a miserable failure she had made. It seemed to her that the only thing left to them now was to separate. Often before, she had thought that this was what their quarreling would ultimately lead to; but she had always shrank from it with all of her morbid sensitiveness. It now seemed to her that she

had procrastinated too long—had endured pain that she might have avoided if she had not been so much afraid of the greater pain which was unavoidable. This feeling that it was inevitable changed her timid dread into a passionate desire to have it over and to make it thorough. To her a separation meant a divorce.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Florence was still sitting where Woodmanse had left her, two hours later, when Mrs. Slooper and Gooddale rang the bell. If her face showed any trace of what she had been suffering they were too much absorbed in themselves to see it. They were in a great glee and had been having a gay time as they drove out from Los Angeles. It was Saturday and they were going to remain over Sunday. Gooddale had met Mrs. Slooper on the street in Los Angeles and asked her to come out and preach for him the next day.

All this they told Mrs. Woodmanse as they came in, took off their wraps and took seats in the parlor. A few minutes after they came, Mrs. Slooper saw Woodmanse and Gifford passing in Woodmanse's buggy, and she rapped upon the window and beckoned to them. As they stopped and hesitated, she went to the door and told them that they had better come in and see her.

Although Mrs. Thompson's tongue had made so much trouble in the Woodmanse household, it had not affected the friendship of Woodmanse and Gifford. Gifford had heard nothing of it, and when they came into the room his manner toward Florence was just as it had always been; but to Florence the fear that he might have heard what she had heard could not be suppressed, and showed itself in the way she greeted him. He saw this, and saw in her face the evidence of her recent trouble, and wondered at it.

It was still early in the forenoon, and while they were talking of the beautiful days they were having, Mrs. Slooper suggested that it would be a beautiful day for a picnic. Gooddale took it up immediately, and then Woodmanse joined in, and the more they talked of it the more enthusiastic they became. It was Woodmanse who suggested that they go to Millard's canon and go through Pasadena, where they could buy the refreshments to take with them. Mrs. Slooper suggested that one of the young men go for Clara Thompson, and Gooddale immediately volunteered. Gifford saw too

little of this kind of pleasure not to anticipate pleasure from a drive to Millard's canon and back with as jolly company as Mrs. Slooper. Although Florence was far from being in a mood for pleasure-seeking, she could say nothing to meet the strength of desire the others were displaying; and then she had Mrs. Slooper and Gooddale to entertain, so the best thing for her to do was to float with the current. Gooddale's horse was hitched to the post in front of Woodmanse's house, and Woodmanse's to the one in front of the office, and Gifford's at Hanna's store, where Woodmanse had picked Gifford up. "See, even the horses are eager to go," Mrs. Slooper said, directing attention to Woodmanse's horse pawing with impatience.

Gooddale went after Clara and was back with her in an astonishingly short time. As they drove up, the other four were walking out to the street, and Clara greeted them with the happiest of bright smiles. She and Gooddale sat in the buggy talking to Mrs. Slooper and Florence, while Gifford and Woodmanse went after their buggies, and as they drove up Clara and Gooddale

started on. Woodmanse, to Florence's surprise, assisted Mrs. Slooper into his buggy and drove off. His animosity toward Florence was such that he had a desire to defy public opinion. There was an implication in his actions that he thought only a man could do this, but the thought was not clearly defined. Nor did he definitely realize that he left Florence no alternative but to defy public opinion also. Her first thought was of what her neighbors would think to see her drive off with Gifford after what Mrs. Thompson had said of his attentions to her. Her second was, that she had no alternative that would be less scandalous since her neighbors had seen them all come out prepared to go away together. She got helplessly into the buggy with Gifford and they drove off after the others. He saw her extreme embarrassment, and tried to think of something to say that might distract her attention. As he thought of how smiling and happy Clara had looked when she and Gooddale drove up together, he said: "The fox to whom the grapes belong seems to have found them."

But Florence's mind was so confused that

she could not follow or grasp what he meant until she had made him awkwardly explain. Then she said with rather a distracted manner: "And do you still think them so sour?"

"I never said they were sour after I found I couldn't reach them."

"You said something that was just as bad."

"No, not afterward. It was a long time before that I said I thought she might be deceitful, but you didn't agree with me."

"Well, I used to think I knew Clara, but I have about come to the conclusion that I don't know anyone. I mean, to really know anyone, and least of all, myself."

"Well, you know that all I know is that I don't know. So I think you are drifting my way."

"I sincerely hope I may never become such a skeptic as you are."

"Why? Do you think I am so bad?"

"Yes, I don't believe you could be in earnest about anything."

"Perhaps I have never been properly excited."

"I would as soon expect to see one of those mountains excited."

As the dust was very bad on the plain just outside of Manzanita, Gifford had fallen behind the other buggies to avoid their dust, and when he turned down the river along the road at the foot of the bluff he discovered that they were driving very fast and were a long distance ahead. As Mrs. Woodmanse had seemed very much embarrassed at her husband's playing her the trick he had, he thought this, too, might worry her and touched his horse up. The horse could go when he was compelled, but knew well enough how to take care of himself; so when Gifford forgot him again he dropped back into his old jog trot.

The air was heavy with the pungent odor of the chaparral on the hills that rise abruptly at one side of the road. Florence had had but little outdoor exercise for some time, and this Southern California atmosphere seemed enough, alone, to make anyone happy. Gifford did most of the talking, speaking openly of whatever was uppermost in his mind.

"I never was of the opinion that people

of opposite dispositions should marry so as to balance. I believe the nearer they are alike the better they will pull together."

"But people don't pull together like a team of horses. They have to be suited to one another in a thousand different ways; and if one has what the other lacks, they make a more perfect whole."

"That sounds very well, but it doesn't take the most important item into consideration. They make a more perfect whole if we consider them as coupled merely to fight off the balance of the world; but if they are united for their own happiness the most important item to be considered is the egotism of man; and if you have observed that egotism, you have seen that it has more charity for faults that are like its own and more admiration for virtues that are like its own."

This thought was new to Florence, and it at once began to connect itself with what was uppermost in her thoughts. Gifford's mind went back to what he had seen in her face when he first met her that morning. He wondered if there were some unhappiness in her life, and was reminded that he

had often thought he had seen such evidence. The horse trotted contentedly along, enjoying its driver's thoughts while it could. Suddenly Florence looked up and said: "Oh, Mr. Gifford, do look at that horse—and where are the others?"

Gifford took out the whip and touched the horse up, and he glided off into a swift trot. "You are afraid you will get lost from that love of a husband of yours."

To Florence his words seemed ironical, but she answered equivocally: "Matrimony without love would be a poor thing indeed."

"Well, I don't believe in love," Gifford replied very deliberately. "I believe I told you that once before, and you put me down, but I didn't make myself clear, and I don't suppose I ever will. Of course I do believe in love, and perhaps will some day be able to get as much pleasure out of it as anyone; but I don't think it the almighty high thing that the world cracks it up to be. Love is an emotion; but there is a respect which comes from the judgment, which is higher than any emotion and is the thing that the world should bow down to and worship."

"Perhaps true love includes both."

"Well, even if I granted that, it would still remain true that what the world should honor most is the friendly respect. But I don't believe that there is any necessary connection. I need not scruple to tell you that I love Clara Thompson as truly as any man ever loved a woman; and although I have respect for her, I have never respected her as much as I would like."

"That is it. Your high respect is purely ideal. You can never hope to meet anyone for whom you would have such a perfect respect."

"I beg your pardon, but I will—I have already—my respect for you is sublimely perfect." He said this smiling straight at her. "But it is never in the least likely to make me love you—I mean—it never would if I had known you before you were married."

She had such confidence in his sincerity that she smiled back at him, but she reached for the whip and he snatched it up, laughing, and touched up the horse.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Gooddale had dashed off from the Woodmanses at a rapid rate. He sat upright, without touching the back of the buggy, his arms stretched stiffly out in front of him, holding the lines one in each hand.

"If there is anything I do enjoy," he said, "it is holding the strings behind a stepper. A good many people have told me that I would have to give it up in my profession, but I will show them. I came by it honestly, and I will stay honestly by it. There never was a better man than my father and that is where I get it. He brought the finest stable of horses from Kentucky that was ever in California. He never would let anyone pass him. I remember once he was driving a fine span of young horses in the park at San Francisco, when a team passed him, and he was so disgusted he threw the lines right down and got out of the buggy and went home on the street car, leaving the man to drive the team home. I guess

that was the first man who ever passed him, and I have never heard of one doing it since."

He kept his horse at its best speed, and talked on, while Clara kept glancing back over her shoulder. "The people in the East don't know that we have as good horses out here on the coast as any in the world, unless it is in Kentucky. They have a very poor idea of us out here, but I showed them when I went back there to make a visit that a Western boy was not to be sneered at."

Mrs. Slooper was chatting gaily to John; and he was enjoying her company, but he was enjoying his driving more. But he was too good a horseman not to know that Gooddale had taken too fast a gait for so long a drive. And although it is down grade to East Los Angeles, it is up grade from there on. The hills they had to climb are evident enough to everyone, but the ascent of the plain is so gradual that a careless observer would not see it; although to a horse drawing a load it makes a great difference. As Woodmanse's horse was comparatively fresh, and was hardened to long drives, he did not hesitate to keep up with Gooddale.

When they stopped in Pasadena to buy their provisions, Woodmanse eyed Gooddale's horse critically, but said nothing. Mrs. Slooper suggested that they wait there for the others, but Gooddale would not hear to it —they would not wait in those crowded streets—they would go on to the canon, where it was cool and quiet, and Gifford could overtake them there—he probably wouldn't be along for an hour, anyway, with that slow horse of his. He led off again and Woodmanse followed, although Gooddale took a different course from the one Woodmanse usually took when going to the canon. Up the grade, through North Pasadena and on toward Altadena, Gooddale urged his horse at a rapid rate. Somewhere above North Pasadena the horse slackened its pace, staggered and fell. Gooddale jumped out and kicked it on the back, and then took hold of the rein and jerked it, but the horse made no attempt to rise.

Woodmanse drove up and got out and helped Clara to the ground. He took off his coat deliberately and laid it in the buggy and commenced to loosen the harness of the fallen horse.

"She stumbled," Gooddale said, his voice trembling with excitement.

After Woodmanse had unfastened all of the straps he could reach, he pulled the buggy back out of the way. He then went around in front of the horse and, squatting down, looked attentively into her eyes. He run his fingers as lightly as a feather behind her ear and down under her chin. It was merely a caress—he knew that her pulse would tell him nothing. As he rose and stood gazing at the horse, Mrs. Slooper, who had been watching every movement he made, said: "Doctor, when I am sick I want you to come to see me, even if I am a hundred miles away."

"All right," he said, laughing with more genuine pleasure than she had ever known him to.

"What do you think of the horse?" she asked.

"Oh, she'll get up in a few minutes. Mr. Gooddale needs to take a few lessons in horsemanship; that is all that's the matter."

"I didn't drive her too hard, if that is

what you mean. She stumbled and I think she fell so hard that it stunned her."

At this Woodmanse laughed, but deigned no other reply.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Gifford kept his horse at a brisk trot through the streets of South Pasadena and up into the center of Pasadena. As they saw nothing of the others, he bought a few things that pleased his fancy and they started on, turning west to the street that leads directly north into the canon.

The talk of the Manzanita gossips had receded into the past, and Florence was giving way to the pleasure of the moment. It was the first time for many days that her mind had been free from the worries of strife. It is useless to say that it was not her disposition to give way to hilarious enjoyment—her happiness was not to be compared to the babbling brook, but to the strong even flow of the deep stream which sweeps everything in its current along with it.

"I think," she said, "that if we both would give our undivided attention to this horse we could keep him going."

"I can't see that we both accomplish any more than one; and since you don't care to listen to my talk, I can talk on and you can give your exclusive attention to the horse."

"That would be a very pleasant arrangement, but I am afraid it wouldn't suit my magnanimous disposition—I would involuntarily reward you with a little attention. And, although I don't set any great store on your conversation, it does have an element of novelty that is pleasing to me. Especially when you talk of morality, although Mr. Gooddale says you have none."

He laughed in sympathy with her mood, and then said earnestly: "*You* don't think that I have no morality?"

"I think you are like a battleship that has just been launched, and has not yet had its trial trip. Not an ordinary battleship by any means; but a dynamite cruiser, or something of that kind—which the world is looking askance at, for it is not known whether it will blow up from internal complications or do good work against the common enemy, Evil."

"Gooddale thinks I have no morality be-

cause I honor the Common law and not the Clerical law."

"But *do* you honor the Common law? Won't you lay just as unhallowed hands upon it when it comes in your way as you do upon what clergymen call the Divine law?"

"Well, we can't expect perfection in this world, and one has to be more or less of a sacrilegious cuss to be able to throw off old superstitions, and the same disposition is inclined to treat lightly old, established truths. But I flatter myself that I stick closer to them than any other man who thinks for himself."

As he stopped she said: "I am not an ordnance expert, but I would like to know the principle upon which you are constructed."

"Well, you know that one is likely to run upon a communist at any time. We find them in the most unexpected places, and they strike at the very foundation principle of society; and the men who defend the present form of society are not brave enough to stand boldly upon that foundation prin-

ciple and defend it—they, as much as the others, deny its truth and are helpless."

"You are an enterprising moralist," she said, entering seriously into his serious spirit; "why don't you develop your ideas?"

It was pleasing to Florence to have him so frankly confide his most serious thoughts to her; for it was evident that they were his most serious thoughts. The intellectual glow of his countenance would have kindled anyone, and to one who lived the life that she lived, and had as great a thirst for knowledge, it was very pleasing.

"There is not a true definition of Justice to be found in any of our books," he continued thoughtfully. "But few have ever been attempted and they are lamentable failures. Although they differ greatly, none that I can discover have hit near the truth. Government is a combination of the strong against the weak in the struggle for possession of the earth; and Justice is a yielding to each member of the combination his part according to the law of the combination."

He was looking earnestly into her face, but she could not keep from smiling, and when he had finished she began to laugh and

said: "Now, I know you will blow up when you go to battle."

Although this provoked a smile, the earnest expression of his face did not change. "Of course it seems absurd," he said, "if it didn't the world would have accepted and taught it long ago."

"But it is not true. Justice is the strong yielding to the weak that which is their right and due."

"The comparatively weak," he corrected, "that are within the combination. If the members had to each struggle for his part, there would be no combination. For men to remain in the combination it must give them advantages that they would not have outside. And Justice began when animals first became gregarious—when they first discovered that in unity there is strength. After they began to form combinations, the struggle for existence was transferred from the individuals to the principles of combinations. The one which is the best suited to hold the greatest number of the strongest individuals together is the one which is surest to survive."

"But don't you see," she said, earnestly

taking up the subject, "that your principle is contrary to all advancement?"

"No, I don't. It is the most finished part of the law of the survival of the fittest, which is the most universal law of the Mysterious Power that is creating the Universe."

"But don't you see that all modern improvements and all recent events of history have been to ameliorate the condition of the lowly?"

"In so far as is consistent with the first principle of Justice and no more. That old, cruel, bloody oppression of the weak by the strong is a remnant of the spirit of the old individual struggle for existence, and the world is only beginning to discover that the strong can dominate the weak without cruelty. When the world has finished a perfect Justice it will be one in which the struggle within the combination is a perfect imitation of the old individual struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, with the cruelty eliminated."

When they came to the brow of the hill, where the road leads down into the canon, all before them was a tumultuous sea of

mountains, and far down below was the bed of the canon crowded full of trees and shrubs. As they looked at this rugged scene, and, as the road wound about, they had glimpses of the sloping plain behind them covered with orange groves and villas, it is little wonder that they thought it beautiful.

Florence had never had such high tribute paid to her intellect as Gifford's strong, frank confidence yielded. And Gifford had never had such a sympathetic listener. The rough and tumble circumstances of this world had never thrown two more congenial spirits together. Neither was inclined to interrupt his or her happiness by an attempt to analyze it. But little they realized that they had never before been so happy.

"A combination of the strong against the weak," Florence repeated, looking vaguely at the passing landscape, "in the struggle to possess the earth. I suppose you think that the strong are the inheritors of the earth and the weak have no right here except as they are of benefit to the strong."

"Yes," he answered.

"That is terrible," she said, turning her earnest eyes directly into his.

"I know it," he said emphatically. "I know it. It seems just as terrible to me as it does to you. But that is because we have been schooled away from the truth. And perhaps all of that schooling was necessary to get the ages-ground-in cruelty out of us. Perhaps when that has been accomplished we may be allowed to teach the truth; or, perhaps, even now, so long as our 'seeming' contradicts our judgment, it will be no harm for us to know the truth."

"You do say some strange things," Florence said, laughing a little nervously. "You twist things around so. Sometimes I will think of something you have said and it will seem as though there were not a bit of truth in it; and you will take it and twist it around and fit it in and pat it down, and it will seem as smooth and nice as if—as if I had said it myself."

Nothing could have given Gifford more pleasure than this honest, childish compliment. He turned away, and, picking up the whip, began to flick it at the bushes as they

wound around on the steep hillside down toward the bottom of the canon.

"Well," he said, "a great deal of the seeming contradiction is caused by the heterogeneousness of moral principles—secondary and minor principles run counter to first principles, to take off some of the points and sharp edges. And this perhaps is one great reason for not recognizing the first principle. It was sufficiently potent long ages ago, before science was thought of, and men have since been so impressed with the importance of perfecting the minor principles that they have been blinded to it; and as it still remains sufficiently potent to take care of itself, it is not necessary for them to recognize it even now."

"I don't believe that you have very much confidence in the utility of your discovery."

"I don't know that it has any utility." This speech was greeted by a merry laugh from Florence.

"What are you laughing at?" he inquired.

"Because that speech was so wonderfully characteristic. The prohibition people and the women's rights women, and the hard money men and the soft money men, and

the infinite number of other factions, each and all think they have found the panacea for evil, and get upon the platform and yell for hours until they are red in the face and ready to die of apoplexy to advance their cause; while you, who think you have discovered the keystone to the arch of morality, gaze at your philosopher's stone for a minute and then throw it into the river, saying that you don't think it has any utility. If it is what you say it is, a moral science can never be constructed without it."

"Oh, I know that, and I know it would be a pleasure to a few thinking men to have a moral science; but they are never likely to go astray, and the rest are never likely to go astray as far as the first principle is concerned."

The mountains which rise up abruptly to form the sides of Millard's canon, are not all flat surfaces and sharp angles, as are some of the canons in the Rocky Mountain region; but they are rounded just enough to form graceful, sweeping lines, combined with bold projections and rugged cliffs. Scattered over them are a few pines

and an infinite variety of flowering and fragrant shrubs and herbaceous flowers and plants and cactuses. The bottom of the canon is heavily timbered. The trees, mostly alders, are not more than a foot in diameter; but are tall and crowded closely together, making a close canopy overhead. To drop down into this cool, shady canon, smelling of the damp wood, with the clear brook rattling over the stones, from the brilliant sunlight of the open plain above, is a delightful change in a country so sunny as Southern California.

Florence and Gifford were gliding among the trees over the smooth, sandy drive and across the rocky fords, chatting of the beauty of the scene, when she looked around and asked: "Does a philosopher enjoy these things?"

"Yes, indeed," he said, entering into the spirit of her raillery.

"I wonder if you really are as wise as you think you are, and I am really riding along here with the greatest moral philosopher the world will ever know."

"There is no doubt about it."

When they came to the end of the wagon

road up the canon, where they expected to find the rest of the party, they found nothing.

"Why! where are they?" Florence exclamed.

"We must have missed them this side of Pasadena," Gifford said. "With a horse as fast as ours they couldn't be expected to get here as soon as we did. No, really," he insisted, "they couldn't be expected to keep up the gait at which they started, with a horse as much fagged as Gooddale's was when he got to Manzanita."

They got out of the buggy, and while Gifford fed and watered the horse, Florence amused herself by idling about a clear pool where the water had stopped to rest among the great clean bowlders before it started to glide on again over the pebbles. When Gifford joined her, she expressed considerable uneasiness about the rest of the party; she was afraid some serious accident might have happened to them. But Gifford did not think anything more than some trivial accident caused by Gooddale's reckless driving could have happened.

"Isn't Mr. Gooddale a strange man?"

Florence said. "I do think there are certainly some of the strangest people in this world."

"Well, out of all the great number of dolts it has been my misfortune to meet, I have never found one that seemed half as bad as I have felt at times. I suppose the spells of serene egotism I sometimes have, must be given me to balance the times of terrible depression."

"If they really do balance, you must sink to profound depths sometimes."

"Why didn't you say real often, and make it complete?"

Florence picked up her skirts and stepped lightly across the stream on the stones and seated herself on a large bowlder where she could look down into the clear water and see the minnows darting about.

He followed her over and selected a stone where he could sit facing her. "Isn't California a beautiful country?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, gazing around at the dense, shady wood, the sides of the mountains, and the shrubs. "This part of it."

"Oh! isn't Manzanita?"

"I didn't mention Manzanita," she replied, looking again into the water.

"You used to like Manzanita."

"Yes, but it is not like home."

"Not homelike?"

"No, not like Chicago. There, if people make themselves disagreeable, one can leave them alone; but in Manzanita one can't, because there is no—anything else."

The same look of suffering that he had seen before settled down over her face as she continued to look into the water; and he wondered if John Woodmanse could be making this lovely woman's life miserable. There was such a striking contrast between her sad countenance and the joyous expression it had had a moment before. He had not missed the fact, too, that she called Chicago home, and not Manzanita.

"Why don't they come?" she said, looking down the canon again. "They certainly must have met with some serious accident."

"Oh, that is not probable. Gooddale may have hubbed a buggy in his reckless driving through Pasadena, but they will get here soon enough."

Florence evidently did not think so, for

she kept looking down the canon and the sadness did not leave her face. "Mrs. Slooper is a good woman," she said absently, and Gifford remained silently watching her. "When I first met her she seemed so frivolous that I was almost tempted to think there was no good in her; but it is not so—she is a good woman."

"She is another illustration of what queer things we see when we don't have our gun along," Gifford said, but he was wondering if she could be jealous, and Mrs. Slooper the cause. "It would be just like her," he thought, "to insist at the same time that Mrs. Slooper was a good woman."

"Her queerness is only on the surface," Florence replied. "She must have had her manners spoiled, when she was a child, by loving parents. Isn't it strange that silly parents can pet their children so much in infancy that they never get over it in after life?"

"I don't believe that Mrs. Slooper's parents are to blame for all of her queerness. I am not an admirer of goody-goody people by any means; but I think she has too much snap about her—she sparkles and flows over

the edge too much and is too proud of having seen a bit of the world in her day."

Florence got up and stood about as though she scarcely knew what to do. Gifford got up also, and began to gather flowers for her. They wandered from one shrub to another, and he climbed some distance up the mountain side and cut a flower stalk of the Spanish bayonet and found a tiger lily in some out-of-the-way corner of the canon. When they came back to the pool she looked down the canon again, with the same wistful look, and said: "I do wish they would come."

Florence was not so blind as not to see that their friendship was very uncommon. But while she was doubtless a woman of superior intelligence, she was not quick to receive impressions; perhaps not nearly so quick as many of her weaker sisters. Impressions once made were too deep to be subject to sudden changes. Although she knew her love for John was so different from a love like his, she had carried the impression so long that she did truly love him,it would take more than a few minutes' happiness in another man's company to re-

move it. And the impression that Gifford loved Clara, although she thought him incapable of loving much, was also firmly fixed. The prudent fear excited by Mrs. Thompson's insinuations would have been stronger if she had ever known Gifford to seek her company more than he had; but under the circumstances their pleasure in each other's company did not seem inconsistent with true friendship. If she had ever had a brother, it seemed she might have taken just such a pleasure in his company. But their enjoying each other's company when they were compelled, as they had just been, to ride to the picnic together, seemed different from their remaining alone there in the canon together. Perhaps something had happened to the others and they might not come at all. She was filled with an uncertain foreboding and the necessity of making a decision.

It was not long, however, after they got back until they heard voices and the crunching of wheels on gravel. "Oh, there they are," Florence cried, jumping up. They walked down to meet them and when the buggies drove into the open space where

Gifford's horse was hitched, they all began to explain. "Our horse got sick and we had to drive at a walk all the last part of the way," Gooddale and Clara explained at the same time.

CHAPTER XXXV.

After the horses were attended to, the men took the provisions and all went up the canon to the falls, where they ate their lunch.

"I don't suppose an old bachelor has anything as good to eat as this very often," Mrs. Slooper said to Gifford.

"Oh, I never eat in this way—I always eat in courses; I have twenty-one courses a —week."

"Yes, and he sits out on the ground against the sunny side of the house in winter to keep warm," Clara said. "He said he did."

"When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do," Gifford replied.

Gooddale was telling Mrs. Woodmanse that the best cooks in the world were the Southern negroes. "When my father," he said, "moved to California from Kentucky, he brought all of his negroes with him. They wouldn't have been left behind for the world

for they just worshiped my mother and father, and were as proud as they could be of the family. They always said it was the most aristocratic family in Kentucky."

No one without prior information and an experienced eye could have discovered the strained relations existing between some members of the company.

Gooddale felt greatly pleased with himself, for, aside from the trouble with the horse, he felt that he was not only having a good time, but he had "cut Gifford out" and impressed Clara sufficiently with the importance of the Gooddale family and of the honor it would be to enter it. Woodmanse's vanity was greatly puffed up by Mrs. Slooper's flattery, and he thought a number of times that day, as he had thought many times before, that it was a pity as successful a man as he should have his life ruined by his wife. Perhaps under this there was a strong current of jealousy, for he had never acted before as he did that day.

The ground about the falls is all stone, and leaves little foothold for trees or shrubs,

so that the canon there is open, although very narrow.

After lunch someone suggested going up above the falls; and, like a startled flock of pigeons, they were all on the road almost as soon as the suggestion was made. The trail winds about up the side of the mountain, and the ascent is easy enough to anyone who is light of foot, but to Mrs. Slooper it was rather a heavy lift. But with one so assiduous as Woodmanse had become, she found the climb a very pleasant one, and they led the way. Gooddale and Mrs. Woodmanse followed, and Gifford found himself with Clara. He wondered if she fell to him from Gooddale's magnanimity, or from Florence's desire to avoid him. As they continued up the mountain, and the order remained the same in spite of numerous stops, he became convinced that there was intention in it; and fully as much convinced that Gooddale's generosity could not reach so far. Why was Mrs. Woodmanse avoiding him, and why was Woodmanse so openly attentive to Mrs. Slooper? These thoughts haunted him. Was Mrs. Woodmanse a woman to endure her husband's

cruelty (for he had now become convinced that he was cruel to her) in silence? She had never seemed to him to be a woman to endure everything—to become a martyr. He had no admiration for martyrs. The world seemed to him like a herd of stampeded cattle, and the ones that threw themselves under foot were only trampled on and forgotten. A woman who had no more spirit than that was unworthy of admiration—a mere milk-sop.

The absent way in which Gifford showed his gallantry to Clara was a red-hot iron to her, and she kept close up to the other members of the party. If the result of John's erratic mood had not been so tragic it might have been amusing.

When they got above the falls they found that they were not in the bed of the stream, where some of them thought they were going, but upon the side of the mountain, far above where the water makes its leap. They decided to turn back and come again soon, earlier in the day, and go on to the upper falls and far beyond.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

As Gifford and Florence drove out of the canon their conversation was limited at first to a few rather formal remarks about the perfect picnic they had had, and the canon being such an ideal spot for anything of that kind. He could not resist casting a few covert glances at her. Why couldn't she throw off her dejection and be happy, as she was when they went into the canon? What strange, unaccountable creatures women were, anyway. All sorts of vain hypotheses suggested themselves to him. Perhaps she was not only a martyr, and had been enduring John Woodmanse's mistreatment in silence, but was a puritan and thought she had been too happy during the fore part of the day and must expiate. From this point of view, she was amusing to him. He began talking, determined to do what he could to make her forget her unhappy mood, and was soon rewarded with a slight unbending. It was a more fascinating oc-

cupation than he took time to realize, this attempt to make happy, even if it were to be only temporarily, the woman whom, by his own confession, he thought so nearly perfect. And she was unconscious of the influence that he was exerting over her. They were not more blind, perhaps, than other people have been when under the influence of an equally strong current.

The conversation drifted around to his strange ideas of Justice. He had a desire to justify his position to her, and she enjoyed hearing him talk upon this subject, for he was most pleasing when he was so much in earnest.

"It is not at all surprising," he said, "that people do not understand the principle of Justice, because it is so metaphysical. For instance, suppose we look at some law or set of laws, as the ones which protect personal property of all kinds. We say that they are not made exclusively for the men who have such property, but for all men; since all men have the privilege of owning personal property. But the only truth in a statement like that is an abstract truth. If we consider men as abstract units—with-

out individuality entirely, and as mathematical points only—it is true; but we never have occasion to so consider them. The only way in which they are of the least interest to us, is with all of their individual eccentricities, and when so considered we see that the non-property owning class are so constituted that they cannot meet the requirements to become property owners and cannot possibly enjoy the benefits of the laws that protect property."

Florence only looked puzzled, but he went on: "The old saying that 'all men are equal before the law' is really meaningless; for so long as it considers them as mathematical points it must stand still; but its first duty (its primary and only intention) is to seek out their inequalities and fix them. There is not a particle of equality in Justice—it is purely selective, augmenting natural selection many fold. It was created with the direct intention of exalting some and degrading others. And during all the countless ages that it has grown, becoming more wonderful in its heterogeneousness, it has never varied from that one purpose. But the principle of Justice is so much a part

of the question of necessity or freedom of the Will, which men have such a great verbal dispute about, that it will be impossible to understand it until that dispute is settled."

Florence did not look much edified, but she looked happy and pleased, and Gifford said, smiling: "You think it is amusing for me to be so much in earnest about a thing like that?"

"Do you believe it?"

"Perhaps," he said, with a quiet, happy laugh.

"Are you sure you don't talk that way just for the pleasure of trying to puzzle others?" She was still smiling happily as she looked up at him.

He was resting his elbow on the back of the seat, and unconsciously leaned toward her, as his eyes looked deep into hers. It was then that he became conscious that he loved her, and the expression of his face revealed to her in an instant what the most eloquent words could not have done in a much longer time. Perhaps it was because it was so nearly known to her before. She turned pale and shrank from him, and then,

as the blood rushed into her face, she turned it away. He dropped trembling back into his place, and thus they sat appalled at the strength of their emotions.

Her first thought was that the worst of Mrs. Thompson's galling insinuations had come true; and John's terrible words, "You have no one to blame but yourself," became unbearable. It was all so clear to her now, that it seemed almost as though she had known it all the time. If she had not tacitly admitted it, she had felt it in every fiber, and, suddenly, that leap of her heart, that she would feel as long as she lived, had turned her happiness into a burning shame.

To relieve their embarrassing position, Gifford tried to go on with the subject of which they were talking. "You don't believe in my principle," he said. "You don't believe that what I have just said is true."

"I don't know," she replied hesitatingly. "Perhaps I don't understand you."

"It is so difficult to make clear. I believe in justice as it is practiced, although my definition of it is so cruel. It seems to me that almost every one else believes in its

cruelty as much as I do, although they refuse to acknowledge it."

This was not said in the spirit in which they had been talking. They were abashed and their talk became desultory and of trivial things. When they reached Manzanita, and Gifford left Mrs. Woodmanse and drove off alone, there was a great happiness in his heart. He did not speculate as to whether his love was returned or not. If he had been asked, or if he had asked himself, he would have said that she did not love him. He thought of her just as he always had, and he certainly had never been guilty of thinking of her in that connection. To him, to love, alone, was sufficient happiness; he was filled to overflowing with a glorious emotion produced by the so recent presence of the woman he loved. It is not surprising that he thought of the empty things he had said of love. The emotion he had before called love was not what he now felt. No judgment, no anything, could stand before this—it must sweep everything before it. All the other emotions he had ever enjoyed in life seemed like men walking on the plain to a man standing upon a

mountain. When he got home and put his horse in the stable, he could not go into the house, but climbed up the hill back of it and onto the higher mountain beyond. He stood looking out over plains and ocean. It seemed to him that he was physically in a position similar to his emotional position—as though he were exalted above everything that he had ever been before. What was it that had been latent within him all of these years, and that was only to be called forth in this way and that was to puff him up until he felt as though he could reach the skies? And what if he had never met Mrs. Woodmanse; would it always have been latent? It seemed to him that it was too important a part of destiny to ever have been left out.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

That evening when they were alone together Florence sat down on the sofa by Mrs. Slooper and said: "Mrs. Slooper, I want a confidante."

"You have come to the right person," Mrs. Slooper said, placing her arm about her. "You are not happy, my dear."

"Oh, Mrs. Slooper! I am in trouble. You must advise me what to do."

"Certainly, my dear; I will do anything in the world for you."

It was not long before she had heard the whole story of the unhappiness in the Woodmanse household. Florence did not say that John had treated her badly, but merely that they could not agree; and how it seemed to anger him—how impossible it seemed to her to comply with his wishes enough to prevent him from being unhappy, and how often he had expressed a desire for separation. And then she spoke of Mrs. Thompson's insinuation and of the unhap-

piness it had caused, that seemed to be without end; and of how, after John's last cruel words, she had finally made up her mind to ask for a divorce. She had such full confidence that that was what he wanted, that she had made up her mind to give up the struggle.

Mrs. Slooper's policy was to go with public opinion, or to swim with the current, as she expressed it, and anything so unpopular as a divorce she disliked very much. But she was a warm-hearted woman, and Florence's story appealed to her. Although she was so much surprised at first, to learn that Doctor Woodmanse was not the perfect husband that she had always thought him, as Florence went on, it became evident that he was a very different man in his home from what he appeared to the public. And knowing the strength of Florence's character, the certainty that she had not come to her with this trouble without feeling that she was driven to it, was almost enough alone to convince Mrs. Slooper that it was too late to hope for a reconciliation. She felt that Florence would not have taken so decided a step until she had exhausted all

other resources. All that Florence told pointed in the same direction—it told of a great struggle against this step.

"Don't you see," Florence went on, "What a trying position I have been in? When we first had trouble, although it was almost unbearable, I could not advise with anyone, because I could not complain of my husband to anyone else. And, so long as I could not bear to turn back, but must go on, it seemed necessary that these things should remain too sacred to confess to another. But it was all too near me for me to judge it properly. It had become my whole life; I could see nothing else and I could not know that I was not magnifying it out of all reason. Oh, don't you see how terrible it was?" She fell upon Mrs. Slooper's shoulder, weeping, and Mrs. Slooper caressed her and repeated consoling words until she became calm.

"I believe," Mrs. Slooper said gently, "that you would be more inclined to suppress it than to magnify it. If you have magnified anything it must be your fear of a divorce. They are such serious things that we are all inclined to magnify their se-

riousness. If you and Dr. Woodmanse, after trying all these years, have found that you cannot be happy together, the best thing for you to do is to separate."

"That is the way it seemed to me before you came this morning. I sat there so long thinking it all over; how relieved he would be, and how lonesome we would both be; but our lives would only be saddened and not stormy. It was all so clear that it seemed almost as though we were divorced and he was becoming a stranger to me. When you came I should have told you then, but you came so unexpectedly, and it was all so new to me."

"That is all right, dear; you must not worry any more," and Mrs. Slooper patted her affectionately upon the shoulder.

"No, it is not all right. If I had confessed to you then, everything would have gone on as I thought; but now it is all changed. What I have learned since changes it all."

She then told Mrs. Slooper that what she had seen that afternoon made her believe that Mrs. Thompson's insinuation had almost become a prophecy. She told enough to show that Gifford had been modest and

considerate, but she said that she was convinced he thought more of her than he ought. "It is not as Mrs. Thompson said," she continued, "for he never sought my company, nor seemed to care any more for my society than any one else, until this afternoon. But because he could not help what has happened doesn't prevent it from being wrong. Mrs. Thompson must have felt it, although she exaggerated, and Clara must have felt it, too, and that is what made her treat him as she did. It could not be helped then, but it can now, when we see what the cause of the trouble is. Now, don't you see, that things can't go on as I had planned before you came?"

"No, I don't see," Mrs. Slooper said blankly.

"Don't you see that I am as much at fault as he is, and that that has caused all of the trouble between Doctor Woodmanse and me?"

"Well, my dear, I think you are only making trouble for yourself. You say that Mr. Gifford has acted a perfect gentleman, and I have seen enough of your friendly intercourse with him to know that it has not

been the cause of your trouble. Doctor Woodmanse and Mr. Gifford are the best friends in the world, so that there cannot have been any jealousy to cause the trouble."

"Oh, I know it was nothing of that kind, but it was something deeper, something more subtle."

"You may be right, but I am sure I don't understand you. Married people must meet the world as well as unmarried people. And if they meet people, they cannot be expected to be perfectly indifferent to them. Some they will think stupid and unattractive, and others they will think intelligent and attractive, and no harm can come of it."

"But harm did come of it in this case. If we had not thought so much of each other he would have been happy with Clara, and I with Doctor Woodmanse."

"What would you have then; must men shut their wives up and allow no one to look at them?"

What Mrs. Slooper thought, but did not say, was: "They had better learn to treat them decently."

Although it had grieved her so much when Florence first mentioned Doctor Wood-

manse's cruelty, Florence's cause immediately enlisted her sympathy. She did not become so much a partisan as near relatives would, for they, seeing nothing but that one who is near and dear to them has been injured, go to the extreme of insisting that there is nothing but evil on the other side; but it was Mrs. Slooper's disposition to take sides, and this love between Florence and Gifford appealed to her warm heart. She felt without knowing it that it would take the appearance to Florence of an overpowering temptation. So long as Florence's intention of getting a divorce was painful, it seemed like a duty; but as soon as it appeared that it was becoming a pleasure, it seemed like a sin. Mrs. Slooper felt this in a vague, indefinite way and her words involuntarily took the form of an argument to convince herself and Florence that a duty may be a pleasure.

"If you think it is your duty to go back to your husband, the last thing in the world that I would wish to do is to say anything to dissuade you; but you are such a strange girl I can't understand you. You decide that you and your husband are so unsuited

that you only make each other miserable, and that it is useless to try longer to live together; and then when you have discovered that which, it seems to me, makes it doubly difficult—when you really discover that you have no love for him, you decide that you must go back and try to make it up to him. There! there! dear, don't cry so. I didn't mean to make it sound so harsh."

When Florence ceased weeping, and did not speak, Mrs. Slooper said: "Why, my dear, don't take it so hard. The only trouble with you is just the one you mentioned. You have kept your trouble too near you; it looks a great deal worse than it really is. You have studied and pondered over your duty so long that you have lost all ability to judge it."

"Sometimes I think so," Florence said, with the same air of extreme dejection, "and at other times, I think it has given me an abnormally clear vision. If we should go on now and get a divorce, the very first thing Mrs. Thompson would say would be that I asked for a divorce so that I might see more of Mr. Gifford."

"Yes, I know, it would put you in just

the critical position that a slanderous tongue enjoys. But we realize enough that a divorce is a serious thing, and that it requires a brave heart to face it."

"I could bear the slanderous tongues if I could only know what was right."

"Now! now! I must call a halt. I am your physician. You have placed yourself in my hands and my prescription is, that we will decide one case at a time. We will consider what is right and just between you and Doctor Woodmanse; but even that much I will not let you consider any more this evening. I will take you to Los Angeles with me in the morning, then we will take time to consider everything carefully and we will be deliberate and just."

For the first few days after Florence went with Mrs. Slooper the latter said but little to induce her to talk, for she felt that to be just they must go slowly, and be as free from emotions as possible; but unavoidably they talked a great deal of what was uppermost in their minds, and Mrs. Slooper rapidly became a partisan in the full sense of the word, and showed a partisan's disposition to exaggerate John's unkind-

ness to Florence. Her argument took just the form best suited to strengthen Florence's first intentions. She said but little about her regard for Mr. Gifford, but dwelt upon her and Doctor Woodmanse's incompatibility of temper.

All during the time when Woodmanse was making Florence's life so unhappy she thought of separation as a duty. If they were joined for happiness and had failed in that, it was their duty to give it up. A union that brought nothing but quarrels and hard feelings certainly was sinful; and the fact that it was painful to acknowledge to the public that they had made a failure only made it as a duty more imperative. This had been in her mind so long, and her conscious love for Gifford such a short time, that Mrs. Slooper's arguments were enough to convince her that she ought to go on.

When Florence had made up her mind to ask for a divorce, she wrote to John and told him all that she thought. The day her letter arrived in Manzanita he was away at Cohuengo all day, and did not go for his mail until he was going into the house for

the night. As he walked along through the still night toward his dark, empty house with her letter in his hand, there was something that told him its contents. When he had gone into the house and lighted the lamp he sat for some time with it unopened. A great change was taking place in him—one of those radical changes that come in the lives of a few men—that was to leave him for the remainder of his days free from all dross.

It had been easy enough for him to make threats to himself that he would not live with Florence if everything were not thus and so; and it had been very easy for him to tell her that he wished he might never see her again, but when his anger had cooled it would have been utterly impossible for him to have taken any steps toward a legal separation. He was not a man without courage, but even the bravest man will hesitate with fear in the presence of an unseen, unknown foe; and that part of the world which sits in judgment upon social matters was so much unknown to him that he would hesitate for a long time before doing anything that he thought might possibly make

it a foe. He guessed that Florence was contemplating taking the first step, and his heart stood still; all that had passed between them appeared to him in all of its appalling seriousness. He was feeling for the first time what Florence had felt so often. He had felt anger and he had felt bitterness, but he had never before fully appreciated how serious it was for two people as intelligent as he and Florence Woodmanse were, to make each other's lives unbearable.

He felt, without thinking it, that if Florence had gone so far as to tell her troubles to Mrs. Slooper she had gone too far to ever turn back. She appeared as one lost to him forever; the stillness of the house had the impressiveness of a tomb; and his thoughts of her attained a purity they had never before had. He could see for the first time that all of his life with her, which he had not given to his profession, had been taken up by his harassing over the little details of life. He had ruined their lives by his passion for perfection. His burning desire to crush out every little imperfection, had irritated him into making his as well as her

life a torment. He had been blind to all that he might have enjoyed—what seemed to him now as the greatest happiness that had ever been offered to man—and had seen nothing but the few flaws that he had been picking at constantly. As he became conscious of these things, he came to realize that this had been Florence's point of view all along. She had always insisted that there were little differences that they must strive to overlook and forget. This exalted her in his thoughts; he not only felt that she had more courage than he, but that she had an intelligence he could never hope to approach.

This, added to his pride, made it impossible for him to think of going to her and telling her what he thought. He resigned himself helplessly to her decision.

When he went to Los Angeles, Mrs. Slooper received him, and he did not ask to see Florence.

Mrs. Slooper was a brave woman, but she felt that she required all of her courage when she went into the room and met Doctor Woodmanse's dignified greeting. He sat upright in his chair, with the same look of

cold, stern dignity upon his face, while she said what she had to say. There was a great fear quaking at her heart when he finally opened his mouth to reply. His words were few and to the point. He would grant Mrs. Woodmanse all that she asked—he would do all that was in his power to assist her. He felt that she was right, that it was folly for them to try longer to live together when they had made such a failure so far. He reached his hand out and laid it on the back of a chair that was sitting near and began a tremulous drumming upon it with his fingers. "It is all my fault," he said. "I have driven her to it. I can never forgive myself for it. God gave me the best wife He ever created, and I have made her life miserable as well as my own."

Mrs. Slooper had enlisted her sympathy in Florence's cause and had thought when she came into the room that she had none for Doctor Woodmanse; but she found her tears flowing in spite of all she could do; such heart-broken dignity was all she could bear.

"It is all because I lack culture, Mrs. Slooper. I have cultivated nothing but my

profession, and have left my heart as untamed as the wild man in the woods. It was unreasonable to expect such a gentle nature as hers to tame as fiery a creature as that; nothing but ruin could come of the attempt." He got up and stood a moment, resting his trembling hand on the back of the chair; then said, as he turned to the door: "I will do as she wishes."

When he was gone, Mrs. Slooper went to Florence and told her all that he had said and they wept together.

Florence wrote of her trouble to her uncle and he came to California. After a divorce had been obtained, they took a cottage at Long Beach for a few weeks. Mrs. Slooper took her two little boys and went with them. As Florence's aunt was dead and her sister Emma married, Mr. Brown (her uncle) had been alone for more than a year. He talked of making California their home, and it was while they were deciding this that they went to Long Beach.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Gifford soon learned that love was not always the glorious halo he thought it that first evening. The days following were long, long days. As they dragged by they became longer and longer. He stuck close to his ranch, persisting in his work from early morning till late at night, but he found it had lost its attractions for him. What were the Woodmanses doing? What wouldn't he give to see her, even from afar —to know that she was in life and health? The days began to seem like months to him. Was this happiness? His work was a galling bondage and his life a restless misery. He went regularly for his mail and back to his ranch, but he did not always find it possible to remain there. He would wander off onto the hills and mountains and come back late at night worn out from physical exercise. Everything that he proposed to himself in the morning as occupation for the day was stupidly uninviting. But what-

ever means he took to pass the time, he was very emphatic in the opinion that there was no happiness in that indescribable longing.

It was not a great while, however, until he heard of the Woodmanses. He was in the store one day and had taken his mail from Hanna and gone back farther into the store and sat down on a nail keg to open his letters. Hanna came from behind the counter with a solemn face and said: "I suppose you have heard that the Woodmanses have separated and are going to get a divorce?"

Gifford looked at him unable to comprehend.

"Hadn't you heard it? Why everybody's talking about it."

"Is it possible!" was all Gifford could say.

"Yes, I guess it's a fact. They couldn't get along together, so they have agreed to disagree."

Gifford remained a few minutes longer, apparently looking over his letters, but really to see if Hanna had anything more to tell. It seemed he did not, for he soon began talking of other things, and Gifford

slipped his letter back into its envelope without reading it and went out. He wanted to be in the open air—he felt oppressed. He wanted to feel the cool breeze so that he could breathe and think. He got into his buggy and drove toward his ranch. What he first thought he could never have told, for his mind was in such confusion. He could not comprehend it; he knew that it must be true, but he could not feel its truth. Whatever his ideas were at first, it soon became very clear to him that this had been coming on for a long time. Woodmanse had talked so much to him about its being foolish for a man to tie himself down with a wife; and that unmistakable look of trouble that he had seen in Mrs. Woodmanse's face when he first went into their house the morning of the picnic was evidence to him that this trouble was nothing new. And he now remembered that he had seen such evidence many times before and had thought little of it.

The days dragged on; and whether he was at work upon his ranch or walking on the hills and mountains back of his house, he saw only her face. It was always with

him, and he thought of nothing else. Gradually an indescribable longing to see her was taking possession of him. But he did not doubt that she knew of his love for her, and he knew that it would be in the way of his going to see her upon the old ground of friendship. He wished that it had never happened, for he had seen it too evidently written in her face that she thought he had done wrong—he could never face her now without more or less of a feeling of shame. He had done wrong, and he knew that she would feel it as a wrong much deeper than he.

But why couldn't he go to see her as a friend? She was in trouble, and needed the encouragement of her friends. If her trouble had been of any other kind it would have been easier, but he felt a delicacy about this; perhaps because he could not deny that it was a pleasure to him to know that she was free; and he knew that when he saw her again the temptation to try to win her love would be irresistible.

Some time after they went to Long Beach, he heard that they were intending to go back to Chicago, and he hesitated no longer.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Although Gifford knew that Florence must have suffered a great deal from what she had experienced since he saw her last, he was surprised to see her so much changed. Not because what she had suffered made her look older, for she looked remarkably young to him; but there was a change in the expression of her countenance; the smile with which she greeted him and the limp hand she placed in his was so different from her usual frank manner. He was not gifted with any great, divining instinct, but something in his heart caused his intuitions to go very straight to the mark on this occasion. He thought her lifeless greeting was not so much because she was not glad to see him, as it was a doubt of herself —an uncertainty as to whether she had done right.

She sat saying few words while he and Mrs. Slooper talked of the changes that had come to Manzanita and of many of the char-

acteristics of Southern California. Finally Mrs. Slooper said to Florence: "Mr. Brown will be waiting for us, dear, down at the beach, and I believe we had better go. Mr. Gifford is going to remain some time I know, and we will take him with us." Without waiting for a reply, she hurried on: "We will take him in bathing. The beach here is so perfect that one can't resist it," she said, turning to Gifford. "It is a real luxury to go bathing here. The water is so shallow and warm."

When they were ready to go out, Mrs. Slooper said, "I am so glad you are going to meet Florence's uncle. He is the dearest man. We thought he would be lonely here after his busy life in Chicago, but he seems to be perfectly happy. He is on the go all day, fishing and bathing and driving on the beach. He not only entertains himself but entertains the rest of us."

Gifford found Mr. Brown all that Mrs. Slooper had said. He was many years past middle life, but strong and vigorous looking, although thin. His cheeks were lank and flabby, forming deep wrinkles about his clean shaved mouth; and his small,

gray eyes were intelligent and kindly. He gave Gifford a hearty welcome, holding on to his hand with a firm grip and talking straight into his eyes. "I have always wanted to go to Manzanita," he said, "and from what I have heard these women tell about the people there, I have thought that when I did go, I would go straight to Gifford's."

His manner was so pleasing and Mrs. Slooper had shown such unmistakable pleasure that Gifford would have felt encouraged if it had not been that Florence's silence was making him decidedly uncomfortable. It was making him so uncomfortable that he decided to go back on the morning train, but when he mentioned it, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Slooper both exclaimed at once: "You will do nothing of the kind!" Mr. Brown continued: "Unless your business makes it positively necessary, we cannot think of letting you go."

As Gifford seemed to look to Florence for some encouragement and she gave him none, Mr. Brown said candidly: "That is just the reason we want you to stay to help take care of this girl. If it wasn't for Mrs. Sloop-

er I don't know what I would do. It just seems as though she won't hold her head up since this thing happened, and you are the first person from Manzanita that has come to give us a little encouragement. Mrs. Slooper and I would be as happy as two children if it were not for her."

Whether it was right or whether it was wrong to torment the suffering Florence in this way, their encouragement was too much in line with his inclination for him to be able to resist it.

The walking was perfect, and Mrs. Slooper and Mr. Brown found themselves taking the lead at first, but they soon began to loiter and then to tarry by the way. "I used to think," Mr. Brown said, "when Florence was a child that she had the best head that it was possible for a girl to have; her judgment was as clear as a man's; but I declare! I believe this business has upset her entirely." Mrs. Slooper was picking up shells and he continued without waiting for a reply. "But the poor child has had a terrible strain, fighting away there all by herself with that hot-blooded creature. We might have known she could never live with

him." He then spoke more directly to Mrs. Slooper: "What about this one, are you sure he is all right?"

"His habits are all right; there can be no doubt about that. The people in Manzanita know one another too intimately for it not to get out if he had any bad habits. He attends closely to business and is studious, but I won't vouch for his ideas. You will have to ask Florence about them."

"Well, do you know, I rather like his ideas as Floss has tried to explain them to me; they show that he is a bold thinker. And I like his face—he has a strong face, and, judging from that eye, he is more than half a man." A minute later he added, smiling slyly: "I would like immensely to hear what he will say to her. With that surf roaring out there, I suppose it is hardly possible that we could get any place where we could eaves-drop them."

After Mr. Brown and Mrs. Slooper had fallen behind, Florence and Gifford walked on down the beach for a long time in silence. The tide was out and the damp sand was as smooth and hard as an asphalt pavement. The air came cool and bracing off the water,

and they walked with such ease that they soon left the little group of people in front of the town far behind. At first their conversation was constrained, but gradually they came to talk of the life in Manzanita, and Florence spoke frankly of her unhappiness with Doctor Woodmanse and of her inability to make him happy.

"I have caused him so much unhappiness that I can never forgive myself for it," she said. "I feel as if I had forfeited my right to ever be happy again."

"You take too much blame to yourself," he replied. "You should allow others to bear their part of the responsibility."

"Well, I should bear mine and my part of the punishment. What others do or what they are, doesn't license me to do wrong."

He looked at her, smiling doubtfully. "You are getting dangerously near a common and very serious error. What others do and what they are is the most important fact to be considered when we wish to decide whether our actions have been right or wrong. We treat different people in different ways; all of our actions have to take into consideration what others are.

Every friend you have will tell you that you did all that was within your power to do. Your troubles are of the kind that are hardest to bear. In extreme cases it is very easy to know what is the proper course to follow, but where the difference between the courses is less plainly marked out, but the necessity to select one none the less imperative, the problem becomes difficult and in some cases almost impossible to solve. But when we have done the best we can, we should not regret, for no man can do more."

"But I do regret—there are some things that I must always blame myself for, that I ought to have foreseen and avoided."

She showed so much embarrassment that he immediately guessed she referred to his love for her, and said: "You mean my love for you? You should not blame yourself for that. It is true there are some who might have foreseen it, but they are the ones who think of nothing else and are always on the lookout for such things."

"Everyone ought to try, at least, to avoid such a great wrong."

"I don't understand why you call it such a great wrong. It was wrong, I admit; I

had no right to love you then—you were another man's wife—the wife of my best friend; but I did nothing after I discovered it that was wrong."

"Oh, it was not that, it was what we did unconsciously that might have influenced others unconsciously, and thus have caused as much unhappiness as if we had knowingly done wrong."

The tragic earnestness of her manner was influencing him as much as her words. "You may be right," he said. "If I were so blind and even went so far as to say that my great respect for you could never lead to love, when I was loving you all the time, there is no knowing what evil influence I may have had over the lives of others that I have not seen."

"Certainly. If we could not see that, we could not see the influence it was having over others. But they, even if they did not see, may have had keener instincts that were more easily influenced. It doubtless influenced our actions to a great extent, and thus must have caused Clara Thompson to treat you as she did and—and who knows how much it may have influenced the ac-

tions of others—it could easily have caused all of the trouble."

Gifford drew a long, deep breath and said in a voice full of contrition: "You, then, think I have caused all of your trouble?"

"No, I don't blame you any more than I blame myself."

"I may deserve all that you say, but I certainly think that you are taking too much blame to yourself. You make no allowance for an equally subtle influence that others may have had over you; which was doubtless the only reason that you took pleasure enough in my company to allow me to see you enough to love you."

"But I have no right to ever allow it to make me happy."

"Would it—could it make you happy?"

Although her face was turned from him, he saw enough to know that she was blushing painfully, and his sympathy for her evident suffering was greater than his own pleasure. But she soon controlled her emotion and turned her earnest eyes full into his and said: "Don't you see that we have forfeited our right to be happy?"

"No—I don't."

"But you admit that what we have done has been very wrong, and that all wrong doing should be punished."

"Yes, but don't you think that what we have suffered already is enough?"

"Do you think that we have suffered enough?"

"You have, and it makes me unhappy to see you take it all so seriously."

"But suppose I didn't take it seriously?"

"And would do all that I wish? In that case I would feel nothing but happiness—the greatest happiness a man ever experienced."

"Where, then, would be the punishment? Don't you see that it is impossible? We would be building our happiness upon the unhappiness we have caused others? We have done wrong, and we should bear the punishment, and the punishment is to renounce our love because it was begun in sin."

"Oh, Mrs. Woodmanse! you can't really mean it," he cried.

She turned her face from him, and he went on gently: "You have always shown me such perfect sympathy that I have

talked to you as I could to no one else. The love that is sanctioned by intellectual sympathy, it seems to me, is the only love that is not blind; it is the only love that can bridge all the gulfs in life. And our intellectual sympathy began before our love, and was really the cause of it. It seems to me that it is ideal."

They had walked far to the east of the town, beyond where the clay bluff dwindles away and gives place to the low sand dunes. The dunes were becoming lower, and over their tops could be seen lagoons, while immediately in front of them the beach was getting lower. From the first, her mood had been so serious and his so much so from sympathy with her, that it had brought him no courage to learn that she loved him. When she continued to keep her face from him and he discovered that she was weeping, he felt bewildered.

Finally she said: "You will not make my duty any harder for me?"

"I will do anything you wish," he said, and his voice expressed all of his helplessness.

THE END.

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